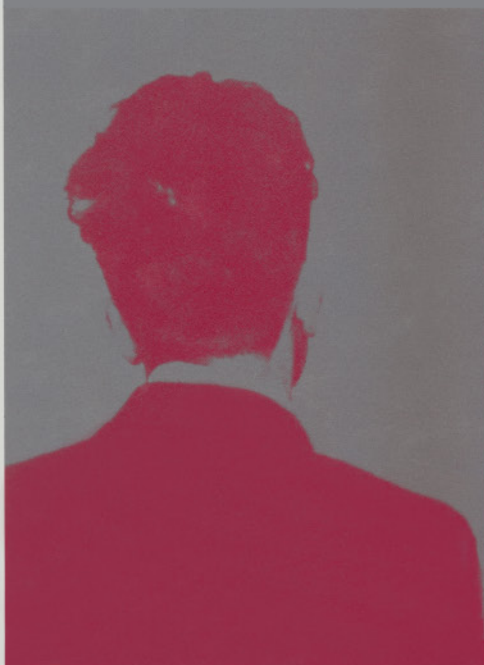


Edited by Eric Homberger with John Biggart

John Reed and the Russian Revolution

Uncollected Articles, Letters and Speeches
on Russia, 1917-1920



JOHN REED AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Also by Eric Homberger

JOHN REED

* AMERICAN WRITERS AND RADICAL POLITICS, 1900–1939

JOHN LE CARRE

THE ART OF THE REAL: POETRY IN ENGLAND AND
AMERICA SINCE 1939

EZRA POUND: THE CRITICAL HERITAGE (*editor*)

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Holger Klein and John Flower*)

** Also published by Macmillan*

John Reed and the Russian Revolution

Uncollected Articles, Letters and
Speeches on Russia, 1917–1920

Edited by

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University of New Hampshire*

with

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M
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For Martin and Margaret, with love

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Introduction

The present volume collects John Reed's articles, letters, transcripts of speeches, unpublished manuscripts and material from his notebooks on the Russian Revolution. It complements *Ten Days that Shook the World* (1919), Reed's contemporary account of the Russian Revolution in 1917. When Reed and his wife, the writer Louise Bryant, went to Russia, he was not an obvious candidate to write the classic eyewitness account of the Revolution. Important Western accounts of the Revolution, such as M. Philips Price's *My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution* (London, 1921) and Albert Rhys Williams' *Through the Russian Revolution* (New York, 1921), were written by correspondents better informed about events in Russia than Reed, and who were more firmly in command of the language; and indeed who were no less sympathetic to the Russian people, no less engaged in the great drama of the Revolution.¹ Yet his book has survived, to become part of the mythology of the Revolution² as well as a powerful impression of its actuality.

Reed was thirty years old in 1917, and had been a prominent journalist since 1913. A romantic sympathizer with the down-trodden, his greatest professional success as a journalist came in 1914 when he was sent to Mexico by the *Metropolitan Magazine* to cover the 'Constitutionalist' revolt against the tyrannical regime of General Victoriano Huerta. The intervention of US military forces in Mexico in 1914 made Reed's *Insurgent Mexico* necessary reading for anyone concerned with the chaotic conditions south of the Rio Grande into which President Wilson was being reluctantly drawn. Reed spent weeks with Francisco Villa, the legendary guerrilla fighter, and rode with La Tropa in the battle at the hacienda of La Cadena; he interviewed the leader of the Constitutionalists, Carranza, and witnessed the battle at Torreón which opened the way to Mexico City for the forces of Carranza. An article Reed published in the *New York Times* in April 1914 was sent by President Wilson to the US Ambassador in Great Britain, with a note saying that Reed 'sums up as well as they could be summed up my own conclusions with regard to the issues and personnel of the pending contest in Mexico'.³

The freedom of movement which he enjoyed as a war correspondent

in Mexico was not repeated when he was sent by the *Metropolitan* to cover the war in Europe. Strict control of the movement and the communications of war correspondents denied him access to leading politicians, as well as to ordinary soldiers and civilians in the war zone. He was no more persuaded by British propaganda, which stressed the Hun atrocities in Belgium, than he was by the German claims to be defending German *Kultur* and the civilization of the West against barbarous Slavdom; neither side, so far as he could see, had humanitarian goals. He denounced the war, and the propaganda which portrayed the conflict as a tournament between 'the White and Spotless Knight of Modern Democracy' and the 'Unspeakably Vile Monster of Medieval Militarism'. In truth, he argued, it was a 'Traders' War' in which Americans had no interest.⁴ The collapse of the Socialist International, and the speed with which bellicose patriotism and chauvinism supplanted the ideals of internationalism, robbed Reed of an important focus for his sympathies. He remained emotionally uninvolved in the European conflict.

Reed's opposition to the war was courageous and principled. He abandoned the Socialist Party candidate in the 1916 presidential election to support the Democratic incumbent, Woodrow Wilson. This was a bitter pill for many American radicals to swallow, for Wilson's strongest support came from the corrupt political machines of the urban North and the racist Jim Crow Democratic Party of the Deep South. The issue of neutrality seemed to override political allegiances. He persisted in his opposition to the war after the United States made its declaration against Germany on 2 April. A more cautious person would have hesitated, and perhaps allowed commercial self-interest to temper his deep hostility to the war. But Reed was recklessly outspoken in such matters, and so, too, were the members of the Socialist Party, which proclaimed its opposition to the war at a special convention in St Louis in April 1917.

Despite his opposition to the war, Reed's reputation as a radical was suspect. His fascination with the aggressive class-conscious style of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) began in 1913 when he visited Paterson, New Jersey, where thousands of immigrant silk-weavers were on strike. He nonchalantly allowed himself to be arrested, and wrote a rousing article about his experiences.⁵ Reed was one of the principal organizers of the famous Strike Pageant performed by the strikers themselves at Madison Square Garden in New York.⁶ His admiration for the

IWW placed him on the far left of American politics, from whence he expressed ironic scorn at the cautious and respectable electoral strategy of the Socialist Party. None the less, Reed's radicalism never quite persuaded those who remembered his enthusiasm for Theodore Roosevelt while a student at Harvard, who resented Reed's refusal to join the Socialist Club, and who were appalled at his decision, as a senior, to accept nomination for political office by 'the Street' against the radical candidates put forward by 'the Yard'. His Mexican exploits made Reed something of a celebrity in Greenwich Village, but he was not politically 'serious'. '[T]o tell you the truth,' wrote Walter Lippmann to Reed after a disagreement in 1916, 'I have never taken your radicalism the least bit seriously. You are no more dangerous to the capitalist class than a romantic guerrilla fighter.'⁷

He was too much a Greenwich Village type, a playboy, a glory-seeking war correspondent like the jingoistic Richard Harding Davis (with whom his reports from Mexico were flatteringly compared). Equally, Reed's poetry and plays (he had been among the founders, with Eugene O'Neill, of the influential Provincetown Players in 1916) made him seem too 'literary' to the austere and knowledgeable Marxists on the American left. His 'Yankee' parentage, middle-class social origin and Harvard education made Reed an object of suspicion. When an organized Left-Wing movement was created within the Socialist Party in January 1917, it was dominated by articulate Russian immigrants, and was under the influence of such able theorists of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party as Nikolai Bukharin, Alexandra Kollontai and Trotsky, who were then exiles in the United States.⁸ It was only in 1918, after Reed's return from Russia, that he repudiated the Bohemianism of his earlier life, scorning those who were 'Playing at art, playing at love, playing at rebellion'.⁹

Reed had been in Russia in 1915, on assignment for the *Metropolitan Magazine*. Without official permission to enter the country, he and the artist Boardman Robinson – wearing jodhpurs, high boots and cowboy hats – simply crossed the border and wandered into the hands of the Tsarist military establishment. Regarded as potential spies, they were held in custody. After being threatened with summary execution they were sent to Petrograd. Vigorous protests by the British Ambassador (Robinson was a Canadian, and thus technically a British subject enabled them to leave – but all of Reed's notes and Robinson's drawings were confiscated. This

first experience of the Tsarist bureaucracy (described in Reed's *The War in Eastern Europe*, 1916) left him with a profound sympathy for the people and their culture, a beginner's enthusiasm for the language and an entrenched hatred of the Tsarist system.

News of the fall of the Tsar in March 1917,¹⁰ and the formation of a Provisional Government, thrilled American liberals. Reed's 'The Fall of the Russian Bastille' (document 1: the inappropriate title was almost certainly provided by the *New York Tribune Magazine*), argued that the events in Russia had the support of 'the solid, respectable and conservative element[s] of the community'. He also noted that in the Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets, and among the great masses of the people, 'sentiment is perhaps more generally revolutionary than is imagined. So that no one knows how far the Russian revolution will have gone by the time this article appears.'

Reed returned to Russia in September 1917 with his wife, Louise Bryant. He was on assignment for *The Masses*, the Greenwich Village radical monthly edited by Max Eastman, and remained until early 1918. They soon made contact with the English and American correspondents, such as Philips Price and Williams, and with a group of Bolsheviks who had been in emigration in the United States and who returned home after the March revolution. They were able to witness many of the most extraordinary scenes of the unfolding collapse of the Provisional Government and the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in the name of the Soviets. Reed's initial description of these events, 'Red Russia: The Triumph of the Bolsheviks' (document 11), was written as the Bolsheviks carried out their revolution. His instinct was to describe the events of the Revolution with journalistic flair and gusto, as he had done in Mexico: it was an incomparably exciting story which fully engaged his sympathies. The second phase of his writing about the Revolution occurred in early 1918, when he was in Norway awaiting the issue of a visa which would allow him to return to America. Reed made his first attempt to write a book about the revolution while in Christiana (now Oslo). Two manuscripts (documents 14 I-II) from that period are included here. In these drafts Reed tried to establish the causes of the Revolution and its theoretical implications. While working on them he was functioning not as an eyewitness or observer, but as a polemicist and historian; they are more analytical in tone, with a deeper and more thoughtful perspective. But they are not examples of Reed's

best work, and are included mainly to suggest the learning-process which took him from these dry paragraphs to the vibrant pages of the book he began later in the year. It was as though the manuscripts of the spring of 1918 represented something he had to absorb, master, and then discard, before *Ten Days* could be written. After his return to America a third phase of his writing about the Revolution began, in which he turned again to what he did best, preparing detailed accounts of specific days at the height of the Revolution: the events of 7–8 November (document 25) and of the 10th (document 21). *Ten Days* embodied the sweep of his first narratives with the rich, observed detail of the later pieces. In the Preface to *Ten Days* he expresses his aim to record 'the spirit which animated the people, and how the leaders looked, talked and acted'. And with the lengthy account of his visit to the Latvian front before the Revolution (document 7) we see material which was not included in *Ten Days* and which remained virtually unknown until now. These diverse attempts to tell the story of the Revolution are now for the first time conveniently available.

The circumstances within which these early pieces were written were extraordinarily difficult. Physical conditions in Russia, rationing, the virtual collapse of the social order, made it a constant struggle for Reed to function as a writer. He also suffered from a shortage of money, once the funds provided by *The Masses* ran out. Sending his articles to the West was no less of an ordeal. Communications during the war were slow and difficult; censorship was strict. After his return to New York he found that conditions were, if anything, no less difficult. Censorship and wartime control of mailing-privileges effectively silenced dissenting radical periodicals after the declaration of war. *The Masses*, where so many of his articles appeared, survived only long enough to publish his thoughts while travelling to Russia (document 4). He published an anti-war essay in *Seven Arts* before it too ceased publication. *The Liberator* and *The Revolutionary Age* (a magazine of the Left-Wing movement of the Socialist Party) continued to publish Reed, but they collectively reached only a fraction of the readers he had formerly addressed in the pages of the mass-market *American Magazine* and *Metropolitan*. There was a gain in frankness (he could say most of what he really thought in the pages of the radical magazines), but there was also a personal loss, keenly felt, in the political quarantine which drove radicals such as he out of the mainstream of US press and journalism. His obvious sympathies

for left-wing policies made Reed virtually unemployable. He was no longer able to publish thoughtful pieces in the *New York Times* warning President Wilson of the likely consequences of his policies. He made one final effort in 1918 to reach the Wilson administration with two memoranda sent to Colonel House, President Wilson's confidant (document 24).

From late 1917 in Petrograd he was the object of a surveillance programme conducted by various military and police agencies of the US government. It resulted in his frequent arrest, the interception of his mail and cables, the systematic obstruction of his movements, confiscation of his notebooks and personal papers, constant observation of his activities, the presence of agents transcribing his speeches and attempts at entrapment on espionage charges.¹¹ His attitude towards the Revolution was indeed highly partisan. When he arrived back in New York in late April 1918 he was a supporter of the Bolsheviks, and everything he wrote about events in Russia should be seen in that light. The 'radical' John Reed who was mocked by Walter Lippmann looked distinctly more threatening to the custodians of the American state. Reed was described by a 'reliable' source in a memorandum of 4 June 1918 from the Office of Naval Intelligence, Navy Department, to the Military Intelligence Branch as follows: 'Reed is a very active Bolshevik agitator and in fact probably one of the strongest in this country because of his connection with the Bolshevik government.'¹²

The first edition of *Ten Days* had carried an enthusiastic preface by Lenin and the first Soviet edition (1923) added a foreword by Lenin's wife, Krupskaya. As early as 1924 Stalin had cast doubt on the reliability of Reed as an observer (for Reed's characterization of his allies, Kamenev and Zinoviev, as 'right-wing' Bolsheviks) but despite this the book appeared in twelve Soviet editions until 1930 when publication was suspended. Approximately two hundred personages appear in *Ten Days* but there is no mention of Stalin except in documents signed by him. Clearly, this was intolerable at a time when Party historians were constructing the myth of 'two leaders' of the revolution – Lenin and Stalin. Later in the 1930s many of the figures mentioned by Reed were liquidated in the Purges – a further reason for banning publication. By contrast, the publication of *Ten Days* by Random House in 1935 did much to ensure that Reed's voice continued to be heard in the West.

After the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, and 'de-

Stalinization', several editions of *Ten Days* were published in the Soviet Union, the first in 1957. It was included in the Library of World Literature series in 1968. Since 1987 (the second year of the Gorbachev administration, the seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution, and the hundredth anniversary of Reed's birth) there has been a proliferation of Soviet publications by and about Reed. In the era of 'glasnost', *Ten Days* has been found valuable not only as a source of information on individuals now 'rehabilitated', but also as a legitimization of Bolshevik rule, given Reed's depiction of popular participation in the October Revolution.¹³

The notion persists that Reed was a megaphone writer, that the blazing Cyrillic characters in the Russian placards and posters which are reproduced in the first edition of *Ten Days* constitute the truth of his writing; that his books lack nuance and modulation. In October 1917 he described a train journey he made with two companions, Albert Rhys Williams and Boris Reinstein, to visit the army front in the aftermath of the loss of Riga:

Very early in the morning we awoke, stiff and numb. The sun sparkled through the frosty windows. A small boy came through with tea – chocolate candy in place of sugar. The train was poking down across rich Estland, through white birch forests glorious with yellow autumn foliage like bright flame; sometimes clumps of sombre pines, with the birch leaves breaking through as if the whole woods were on fire; long, gently-rolling waves of opulent farm land, yellow wheat stubble, emerald green grass still, and the pale blue-green of miles of cabbages; and immense farm-houses set in the midst of barns, the whole covered with one great thatched roof, on which thick moss was growing. On the slow rises of country, huge gray-stone windmills, weathered and mossy, whirled their agitated sails. Along the track marched a new road-bed, with the ties in places at many points, and piles of rails. (Document 7)

This serves to remind us, as does the incomparable description in *Insurgent Mexico* (1914) of the battle of La Cadena and its aftermath, the account of the ebb and flow of the morale of the strikers at Ludlow,¹⁴ and his description of the Serbian killing fields at Goutchevo in *The War in Eastern Europe* (1916), that Reed, at his best, was a writer with few equals among his contemporaries.

What is permanent in Reed's writing was not created by the political loyalties which made him an American Bolshevik in 1919, and the experience of reading his best prose is quite unlike the experience of propaganda. Yet Reed's partisanship is not disguised. 'In the struggle my sympathies were not neutral', he wrote in the Preface to *Ten Days*. He was transformed by what he experienced in Russia, and the present book, like *Ten Days*, is a record not so much of political conversion but of a deepening commitment to a cause and to a people.

Russia seemed unique in scale, distance and politics, and what he had seen on the Latvian front, at the Sestroretsk armoury, at Tsarskoe Selo and above all on the streets of Petrograd seemed the herald of a new dawn for civilization. At the same time, the desperate hardness of Russian life, and the social disintegration which he witnessed during the war, inspired Reed to make an impassioned defence of the Revolution. When he left Russia in 1918, Petrograd was an emaciated city: the population had shrunk to 1.5 million from its figure of 2.5 million before the Revolution. The daily bread ration was 50g per day. When he returned in 1920, the starvation which he saw in the villages (document 35) gives his defence of the Revolution its force. In conversations with Angelica Balabanoff at that time, awareness of the 'heartbreaking' conditions in the countryside made them both frantic to defend the Revolution and its promise, and fierce opponents of the careerists and cynical manipulators (they had in mind Zinoviev and Radek) who seemed to care nothing for the condition of the people.¹⁵

It is none the less hard, with hindsight, to share in full Reed's willingness to give the benefit of every doubt to the Bolsheviks. Not only White opponents of the Revolution had predicted starvation, mass murder and suppression of human rights. The starvation was already a fact of life in Russia. In June 1918 he acknowledged that there had been violations of the rights of freedom of speech, that illegal searches and requisitions had been made and that people had been arrested (document 17). But this did not add up to 'tyranny' to Reed: these were events consequent upon a revolution, and many of the opponents of the Bolsheviks were still at large. The most bloodthirsty proclamations were certainly not those of the Bolsheviks, as Reed makes clear in document 19 II:

The dreaded Mr Bleikhman's advocacy of massacre is nothing new. As in all Revolutions, there is always somebody around

Petrograd urging wholesale slaughter. If the bourgeoisie keep on sabotaging and calling upon Germans and Japs to come and save their property, it might even happen. I can't somehow see Russians cold-bloodedly resolving to do it, however, and then doing it.

An assessment of the Russian character, then, reassured him that a Jacobin Terror was unlikely. Reed vigorously rejected the fears expressed by the critics of the regime, and he regarded the suppression of human rights as a temporary necessity, an aberration. Yet it is this aspect of the legacy of John Reed, and indeed of so many Western sympathizers with the Revolution, which is so difficult to swallow.

When Emma Goldman arrived in Russia in January 1920, after being deported from the United States, she complained to Reed of the repression of the opposition. Reed was particularly bitter about the PSRs and other socialists who had allied themselves with the Whites and their foreign backers. The struggle of such people against Tsarist autocracy in the past meant nothing now. 'I don't give a damn for their past', he argued. 'I am concerned only in what the treacherous gang has been doing during the past three years. To the wall with them! I say. I have learned one mighty expressive Russian word, "*rasstrelyat*"! (execute by shooting).'¹⁶ I am sure that Reed meant what he said to Goldman. But he was also saying other things with these ruthless words. Goldman, an old friend and political ally from New York, had hoped that the Revolution would endorse her own anarchist libertarianism. Instead, she found Kropotkin in remote exile, his political movement dispersed, and the anarchists widely perceived as political enemies of the Bolsheviks. Although Goldman was not a communist, Reed wanted to warn her of the dangers of sliding from political disagreement into outright opposition to the Revolution. It is significant that he sent her to talk to Balabanoff in Moscow, the one person to whom Reed had opened his heart about the tragic conditions in the Russian countryside.¹⁷ Balabanoff was soon to be deposed from her position on the Comintern secretariat (she was far too independent for the likes of Zinoviev), but she had not, yet, become an enemy of the Revolution. Reed hoped that Goldman would refrain from outright opposition. As early as 1920, opposition to the Comintern meant exclusion and political isolation. From accounts published years later, it is clear that at the time of his death in October 1920 he had the deepest misgivings about Comin-

tern policies, and a strong detestation of its leadership. There has been a lively debate among those who regard Reed as having been so disillusioned that he would have joined Max Eastman, Ben Gitlow, Bertram D. Wolfe and many other former comrades who eventually turned against Bolshevism, and those, such as Reed's biographer, Granville Hicks, who rejected any such idea that Reed could have joined what was known within American Party circles as the camp of the traitors.¹⁸ He died still a Bolshevik, and proud of it. Reed's last pieces on the Revolution, reprinted here for the first time in over seventy years, suggest that he had seen something of the enormity of the tasks ahead, and of the perilousness of the struggle to build a better world.

Norwich

ERIC HOMBERGER

NOTES

1. The range of the American material on the early period of the Russian Revolution is surveyed in Dimitri von Mohrenschildt, 'The Early American Observers of the Russian Revolution, 1917-1921', *Russian Review*, 3 (Autumn 1943) 64-74. A narrower selection of British material is discussed in M. Philips Price, 'Witnesses of the Revolution', *Survey*, no. 41 (April 1962) 14-26.
2. The mythology of the Revolution, constructed in part by Eisenstein's *October* (1927), which draws on Reed's writings, is also a mythology of Reed. Actors have repeatedly been interested in him. In 1930 Noël Coward and Archibald Leach (Cary Grant) approached Louise Bryant about doing a film based on Reed's *Ten Days*. See Virginia Gardner, *'Friend and Lover': The Life of Louise Bryant* (New York, 1982) p. 283. Warren Beatty's *Reds*, in its way, contributed to the mythologizing of Reed.
3. Quoted in Eric Homberger, *John Reed* (Manchester, 1990) p. 74.
4. [John Reed], 'The Traders' War', *The Masses*, September 1914.
5. 'War in Paterson', *The Masses*, June 1913.
6. Martin Green, *New York 1913: The Armory Show and the Paterson Strike Pageant* (New York, [1988]).
7. Quoted in Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (London, 1981) p. 95.
8. The meeting in Ludwig Lore's apartment in January 1917 is described in Bertram D. Wolfe, *A Life in Two Centuries: An Autobiography*, with an introduction by Leonard Schapiro (New York, [1981]) p. 183.
9. Reed, 'America 1918', *Collected Poems*, ed. Corliss Lamont (Westport, Conn., 1985) p. 111.

10. See Editorial Note. Until February 1918, when the Soviet government shifted to the Western or Gregorian calendar, Russian dates were calculated by the Julian calendar, which after 1900 was thirteen days behind. Thus the Russian revolution of 12 March in the West was the 'February revolution' of 27 February in Russia.
11. Homberger, *John Reed*, pp. 164–74.
12. Military Intelligence Division (G-2), *Surveillance of Radicals in the United States, 1917–1941*, 35 reels of microfilm (Frederick, Md, n.d.).
13. For recent Soviet interest in Reed, see E. L. Robinskaya, 'John Reed and Contemporary Approaches to the History of October', *Novaya i Noveishaya Istoriya* (1989), no. 4. Significant annotated editions of *Ten Days* were published by Random House in 1960 (with an introduction by Bertram D. Wolfe), and International Publishers, New York (with an introduction by John Howard Lawson in 1967). Penguin Books proposed to publish *Ten Days* in Britain in 1964, with an introduction by A. J. P. Taylor, but the copyright-holder, Lawrence and Wishart (which had been given the copyright by Louise Bryant), raised a number of objections ostensibly about matters of fact, but largely concerning the political interpretation of the Revolution and the book appeared without Taylor's introduction. It was reissued as a Penguin Modern Classic in 1974 with Taylor's unamended text.
14. 'The Colorado War', *Metropolitan Magazine*, August 1914.
15. Homberger, *John Reed*, pp. 202–3.
16. Emma Goldman, *Living my Life*, one-vol. ed (Garden City, NY, [1934]) pp. 739–40. There is nothing quite so outspoken in Reed's published writings.
17. See Balabanoff's *My Life as a Rebel* (London, 1938) pp. 268–71, for her conversations with Reed.
18. See Theodore Draper's definitive discussion of this problem in his *The Roots of American Communism* (New York, 1957) pp. 284–93.

Editorial Note

Chronology Reed wrote 'Red Russia: The Triumph of the Bolshevik' (document 11) in mid-November 1917. It did not appear in *The Liberator* until March 1918. 'Soviet Russia Now', written in July 1920, was published in the December 1920–January 1921 issue of the same magazine. His articles and cables sent from Russia were invariably delayed by war, censorship and blockade. No such long delays affected what he wrote while in America. It seemed appropriate in an edition of Reed's uncollected and unpublished writings on the Revolution to return these articles to the sequence of their composition. Internal evidence and contemporary reference are usually the basis for allocating dates of composition.

Annotation No attempt has been made to contrast Reed's account of events with the accounts of other witnesses, or his interpretation with those of the many historians who have written on the subject. However, where factual clarification or contextual information seemed necessary, annotation has been provided. No attempt has been made to preserve the precise textual features of Reed's manuscripts, though some revisions have been preserved where they seemed to be of substantive interest. The relationship between the articles reprinted here and *Ten Days that Shook the World* has also been noted. Otherwise, Reed's articles and despatches have been allowed to speak for themselves. Reed frequently used two or three additional points (. . .) at the end of a sentence. These have been retained and do not indicate textual deletions.

Spelling He was, as a busy journalist, inconsistent in his spelling of Russian words and names. His knowledge of Russian was slight, and in many cases he seems to have relied on phonetic spellings of Russian words and names. They have been corrected and regularized in accordance with contemporary practice.

Dates Until February 1918, when the Soviet government shifted to the Western or Gregorian calendar, Russian dates were calculated by the Julian calendar, which after 1900 was thirteen days behind. This means that the Revolution of 12 March (Gregorian calendar) was the 'February revolution' of 27 February in Russia. Reed was inconsistent in his use of dates. 'Red Russia: The Triumph of the Bolsheviki', for example, uses Old Style (Julian) dates throughout; *Ten Days* uses New Style (Gregorian) dates. To make reference to *Ten Days* easier, Old Style dates have been changed to New Style throughout.

Ten Days That Shook the World The Modern Library edition of 1934, based upon the Boni & Liveright first edition (1919), has been used throughout.

Glossary and Key to Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>Borba</i> | Struggle (journal) |
| Bund | General Jewish Worker's League |
| Cheka (ChK) | Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage |
| Chinovnik | Government official |
| dacha | Country house |
| <i>Delo Naroda</i> | The People's Cause (journal) |
| <i>Den</i> | The Day (journal) |
| Duma | Assembly (1905–17) |
| <i>Edinstvo</i> | Unity (journal and associated group) |
| <i>Die Fackel</i> | The Torch (journal) |
| <i>Die Gleichheit</i> | Equality (journal) |
| Golos | Voice (journal) |
| <i>Golos Sotsial-Demokrata</i> | Voice of the Social Democrat (journal) |
| <i>Golos XII Armii</i> | Voice of the Twelfth Army |
| <i>La Guerre Social</i> | Social War (journal) |
| <i>Inainte</i> | Advance (journal) |
| Iskosol | Soldiers' Executive Committee |
| Iskostrel | Riflemen's Executive Committee |
| <i>Iskra</i> | Spark (journal and associated group) |
| IWW | Industrial Workers of the World ('Wobblies') |
| <i>Izvestiya</i> | News Bulletin (journal) |
| kasha | Porridge |
| KPD | Communist Party of Germany |
| <i>Latwju Strelniks</i> | Latvian Sharpshooters (journal) |
| <i>Leipziger Volkszeitung</i> | Leipzig People's News (journal) |
| Mezhraionka | Interdistrict (fraction RSDRP) |
| <i>Narodnyy Tribun</i> | People's Tribune (journal) |
| <i>Nashe Slovo</i> | Our Word (journal) |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <i>Nemzetközi Szocialista</i> | International Socialist (journal) |
| <i>Die Neue Zeit</i> | New Age or New Times (journal) |
| <i>Novaya Rus</i> | New Russia (journal) |
| <i>Novaya Zhizn</i> | New Life (journal) |
| <i>Novoe Vremya</i> | New Times (journal) |
| <i>Novy Mir</i> | New World (journal) |
| oboronets | Defencist |
| <i>Obschee Delo</i> | Common Cause (journal) |
| OGPU | United State Political Administration (Security) |
| Okhrana | Tsarist Security Police Department |
| (Pod-)polkovnik | (Lieutenant) colonel |
| pomeshchik | Landlord |
| <i>Pravda</i> | Truth (journal) |
| PSR | Socialist Revolutionary Party |
| <i>Rabochii i Soldat</i> | Worker and Soldier (journal) |
| <i>Rabochii Put</i> | Worker's Path (journal) |
| <i>Rech</i> | Speech (journal) |
| RKP | Russian Communist Party |
| RSDRP | Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party |
| RSFSR | Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic |
| <i>Russkii Front</i> | Russian Front (journal) |
| <i>Russkaya Volia</i> | Russian Will (journal) |
| SDKP | Social-Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland |
| shapka(i) | Hat(s) |
| shchi | Cabbage soup |
| <i>Shipovnik</i> | Sweet Briar (journal) |
| shveitzar | Porter |
| <i>Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik</i> | Socialist Herald (journal) |
| Sovnarkom | Council of People's Commissars |
| Spartakusbund | Spartacus League |
| SPD | Social-Democratic Party of Germany |
| <i>Svobodnaya Rossiya</i> | Free Russia (journal) |
| <i>Svobodnaya Zhizn</i> | Free Life (journal) |
| tovarishch(i) | Comrade(s) |
| Trudovik | Labour (group) |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Tsentroflot | Centre-Fleet (Central Fleet Committee) |
| USPD | Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany |
| <i>Die Völkerfriede</i> | The People's Peace (journal) |
| <i>Vorwaerts</i> | Forward (journal) |
| Vpered | Forward (fraction RSDRP) |
| VTsSPS | All-Russian Central Trade Union Council |
| vystuplenie | Speech or declaration |
| Zemstvo | Local government council |
| <i>Zhivoe Slovo</i> | Living Word (journal) |
| Znanie | Knowledge (publishing-house) |

Part I

1917

Chronology: John Reed in 1917

- January A trip to China for the *Metropolitan* is announced and then postponed after a speech by President Wilson raises the prospect of American entry into the European war. A well-known opponent of the war, Reed becomes virtually unemployable.
- February The United States severs diplomatic relations with Germany. A collection of Reed's verse, *Tamburlane*, published by Frederick C. Bursch.
- March The Tsar abdicates. A Provisional Government is formed in Petrograd. Reed's 'The Fall of the Russian Bastille' (document 1) is published in the *New York Tribune Magazine*.
- April President Wilson declares war on Germany. Reed, at a meeting of the People's Council of America for Democracy and Peace (called 'the Kaiser's Council' in the *New York Times*) declares, 'This is not my war, and I will not support it. This is not my war, and I will have nothing to do with it.' In testimony before a Congressional committee he explained; 'I just think that the war is unjust on both sides, that Europe is mad, and that we should keep out of it.' Reed's brother Harry volunteers for the army. Reed is socially ostracized by members of the Harvard Club in New York. On the 11th the Socialist Party declares its opposition to the war by a vote of 12 to 1 at a special convention in St Louis. A minority report, signed by leading party intellectuals led by John Spargo, signals the resignation of pro-war socialists from the party.
- May Reed is hired by the *New York Mail* to do signed

feature stories. He argues in *The Masses* (document 2) that the Russian Revolution was 'a middle-class revolution, led by business men, publishers, and the progressive country nobles'.

- June Attends anti-conscription meeting in the Bronx organized by the anarchists Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. Soldiers in uniform break up the meeting and Goldman and Berkman are arrested. Reed testifies at their trial. After a quarrel with Reed, Louise Bryant sails alone to Europe to work as a war correspondent. A contrite Reed pleads for her quick return.
- July Reed's 'The Russian Peace' (document 3) appears in *The Masses*. *The Masses* declared unmailable under Espionage Act of 15 June 1917.
- August Reed's 'The Unpopular War' is published in *Seven Arts*. Reed is exempted from the draft owing to the removal of a kidney in late 1916. After Bryant's return from Europe, they plan a trip to Russia. Friends of *The Masses* raise money for the trip. Reed is required by the State Department to give an oath that he will not participate in the socialist conference due to be held in Stockholm. Reed and Bryant sail on the 17th. Their ship is detained for a week by the British Navy at Halifax, Nova Scotia, while the passengers are interrogated and the ship searched. Reed writes a letter to *The Masses* (document 4) which appears in the November–December issue.
- September Reed talks with socialist leaders in Stockholm. They leave for Russia on the 10th. Letters to Sally Robinson on the 16th and to her husband Boardman the day after (documents 5–6) give Reed's initial impression of the political crisis in Petrograd. He and Bryant fall in with a group of Western journalists (Albert Rhys Williams, Bessie Beatty, M. Philips Price) and Russian-Americans (Boris Reinstein, Bill Shatov, V. Volodarsky, Alex Gumberg), who intro-

duce them to political figures in the crisis following the abortive coup by General Kornilov. Reed's partisanship for the Bolsheviks is soon evident. He is placed under surveillance by Military Intelligence officers at the request of David Francis, the US Ambassador in Petrograd.

- October Reed, Williams and Reinstein travel to the northern front, where the soldiers now support the Bolsheviks. Writes 'A Visit to the Russian Army' (document 7).
- November Reed interviews Kerensky on the 5th (document 9). Volodarsky informs Reed that Lenin has called for an insurrection. On the 7th Reed visits the Winter Palace, seat of the Provisional Government. He finds soldiers erecting barricades in front of the Marinsky Palace. A sailor tells him that the session of the Council of the Republic had been dismissed. Reed hears Menshevik leader Fedor Dan open the Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets and later hears the 'hollow boom of artillery' which signals the beginning of the attack on the Winter Palace. Reed watches the Mensheviks walk out in protest, and hears Trotsky's sneering dismissal: 'You are pitiful isolated individuals; you are bankrupts; your role is played out. Go where you belong from now on – into the rubbish-can of history.' Reed and the other journalists hurry to the Winter Palace, where they join the first rush of soldiers and Red Guards into the building. Returning to Smolny later that evening, Gumberg describes the Revolution to Reed as 'the great anticlimax'. They hear Kamenev announce the fall of the Provisional Government. On the next day (the 8th) they hear Lenin proclaim, 'We shall now proceed to construct the Socialist order!' Reed attends meetings of the City Duma and watches the unfolding of the counter-revolution. He is at Tsarskoe Selo in the aftermath of the defeat of the Cossack forces who had been seeking to expel the Bolsheviks. In a dispatch to the *New York Call*

(document 10) he announces the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution, and conveys Lenin's greetings to the American working class. On the 21st Reed travels with Bryant to Moscow. Writes an extended account of the Revolution for *The Masses* (document 11).

December

The November–December issue of *The Masses*, the last to be published, is sold exclusively on newsstands in New York. Reed is among the editors and cartoonists indicted for obstructing the draft. Reed, in Petrograd, works for the American Red Cross Mission, and for the Bureau of Revolutionary Propaganda in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Bolsheviks sign an armistice with the Germans on 15th. Secretary of State Lansing advises President Wilson to 'sit tight' and withhold recognition of the Bolshevik regime.

1

The Fall of the Russian Bastille

The meaning of the Russian revolution seems to be imperfectly understood in this country. It is not, as many Americans believe, a successful repetition of the revolution of 1905; it is not a peasant uprising; it is not a revolt against war. Its prime movers and dominating figures are liberal-minded provincial nobles, business men, professors, editors and army officers. Its purpose first of all is to unite Russia against Germany. This means at bottom to provide Russia with a Constitution like that of France and England, and a government, like theirs, responsible to the representatives of the people assembled in the Duma. In short, to put Russia's government on a par with that of the nations of Western Europe.

As such, the revolution has been enthusiastically welcomed by the interests controlling the Entente governments, and by the great commercial and financial powers of England, France and the United States. The establishment of a strong constitutional regime in Russia means military efficiency, financial soundness, and the opportunity of immense foreign investment in Russia. As an official of the National City Bank said in an interview, 'It was apparent that the influences back of it were the solid, respectable and conservative element of the community.'

Look for a movement at the Ministry. Prince Georgii Lvov, Premier and Minister of the Interior, is an idealist of royal blood, with an income of 5,000 rubles a year, and president of the Union of Zemstvos (county councils). Mikhail V. Rodzyanko, president of the Duma, is a rich landlord. M. Tereshchenko, Minister of Finance, is a millionaire of the type of Lvov. Pavel N. Milyukov and A. A. Manuilov, respectively Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Public Instruction, are both former professors in the University of Moscow, and are now both editors of newspapers. A. I. Guchkov, Minister of War and Navy, is a wealthy merchant of Moscow, long a preacher of preparedness against Germany, a former president of the Duma and the leader of the Octobrist party.

A. Shingarev, Minister of Agriculture, is a prominent physician. I could go on indefinitely, but I will stop with A. Kerensky, Minister of Justice, who has represented more or less revolutionary sentiment in the Duma, and is significant of another important element in the situation.

In the last two days an undertone of anxiety has crept into the press dispatches. People seem to think that 'the extremists may go too far'. Russian business men tell me that the 'wholesale jail delivery' from Siberia, the project of universal suffrage and the government's recognition of workingmen's right to strike – even in the army – is 'going too far'. There is talk among the labor element in Petrograd of a Russian republic, which seems to worry the Allied press.¹ As a matter of fact, it is probable that none of the managers of the affair really thought it would go as far as the Tsar's abdication. As late as Monday, March 12, the Duma wired to the Tsar that the government could not maintain order, and that a committee had been formed to prevent disorders and form a new ministry which would be acceptable to the people – subject to the imperial approval.

The 'Government Constitue',² as it is called, is made up as follows: The ministry, the Duma Committee and a council of workingmen and soldiers, elected one for each thousand people in Petrograd. In the Duma Committee are radicals like N. S. Chkheidze and S.I. Shidlovsky; in the Ministry, A. Kerensky; in the Labor and Soldier Council and among the great masses of the people sentiment is perhaps more generally revolutionary than is imagined. So that no one knows how far the Russian revolution will have gone by the time this article appears.

Just before the outbreak of the war a great popular uprising threatened like that of 1905. In the ten years since the Tsar gave Russia a paper constitution and pledged reform, every provision of that document had been cynically violated and every promise broken. But before the revolutionists could act, they found themselves in the terrible military mobilization machine. The social revolution was averted. By the least exercise of tact the Emperor could have won Russia permanently to him. But, instead, he gave in to the 'dark forces', as they were afterward called – the old Black Hundred,³ the pro-German nobility and the Reactionaries, who, like the French exiles in 1800, would rather betray their country than see it free. And so there came to be a proverb in Russia, 'To fight Germany is to fight the Russian autocracy.'

Never, probably, in any other country could such a paradox exist; the government, having plunged the people into war with Germany, is pro-German; the people, balked of overturning the government by being plunged into war, refuse to stop fighting, and overturn the government which tries to make peace. And yet the situation is clear enough to those who know something of the relations of Russia and Germany.

For the last ten years Russia has become more and more a commercial colony of the German Empire. Germany used the opportunity of Russia's embarrassment with the Japanese war, and with the revolution in 1905, to force new trade concessions and advantages which gave her a virtual monopoly of most of the manufactured goods used by Russia, and so operated that Russian industries were unable to compete with them. When I was in Russia in the summer of 1915 it was appalling to see the number of ordinary necessities of life which could no longer be procured.

'That was manufactured in Germany,' said a drug store clerk I asked for an antiseptic preparation – and he said it in German.

'We don't carry that any more,' said another clerk, when I tried to buy films for my camera. 'We used to import them from Berlin.'

And so it was with typewriters, clothing, milk chocolate and bicycles. There was no good surgeon in Petrograd, no specialist physicians – they had all been Germans.

Even in wartime, German influence was visible everywhere. Many of their banks and houses of business were operating freely when I was in Russia, and so insolent had some Germans become that they held a grand public banquet in Moscow during the winter of 1914, at which the Kaiser was toasted and Russia '*strafed!*' They had crept into the bureaucracy, and even into the army administration. In the Imperial Court, in the entourage of the Tsarina – herself a German – Germans came and went, forming a little canker at the very heart of Russia; and about the Tsar were always the German-speaking barons of the Baltic provinces.

The Russian governmental structure was honeycombed with corruption and treachery on a grand scale. Sukhomlinov, Minister of War, was accused of selling military secrets to the Germans; General Myasoedov was hanged for furnishing plans of Russian fortresses to the enemy. After the battle of the Masurian Lakes, General Rennenkampf accused his own officers of betraying him. The Grand Duke Nicholas openly blamed pro-German intrigue for the failure to furnish his army with munitions, which caused the

great retreat from Warsaw. When I was in Petrograd, the transportation facilities had broken down to such an extent that passenger traffic between Moscow and Petrograd had to be suspended every few days to allow freight to pass. Cargoes of ammunition, landed at Arkhangelsk, were held there months because no one would sufficiently bribe the railroad workers. Millions of bushels of wheat were sidetracked, lost, sold to the enemy through Rumania, or left to rot on the plains of Bessarabia. And on top of that, the Tsar continued suppress the Duma, appoint government after government of the blackest reactionaries, and try to dicker with Germany for a separate peace.

In the face of the wholesale corruption of the government, the Liberal middle-class anti-German element came forward to volunteer their services. For example, the Association of Zemstvos, of which Prince Lvov was president, offered to do the purchasing for the War Department – which it did to a limited degree with great ability.

All this time the Duma, hampered as it was, had been getting more and more frankly critical. Professor Milyukov was hurling at the government such accusations as had never before been heard in Russia. For example, he said, 'Russia has a government which is extraordinarily inefficient, extraordinarily corrupt and extraordinarily traitorous.'⁴ Rodzyanko was demanding that a committee of the Duma, working in conjunction with the Association of Zemstvos, be given complete charge of the purchasing department of the government and of the manufacture of munitions.

During the first week in September the Tsar answered by sending the Grand Duke Nicholas to the Caucasus, calling to his pavilion at the front Mr. Sukhomlinov, then under a cloud for treachery, and taking command himself – which the ambassadors of the Entente powers believed equivalent to a move for separate peace with Germany. The persistent degeneration of the railway service, the harsh repressive measures taken by the police against public meetings, the shortage of food in the cities, due to the shortage of vast amounts by speculators, had already precipitated riots in May. Now a series of great strikes broke out, and popular clamor against the Tsarina and her German court was heard everywhere. 'They're starving us so we'll be too weak to defend the Fatherland against the Germans!' cried the people. The strikes spread against the Putilov Armament Works, in Petrograd, throughout the railways and the public utilities in every great

Russian city, to be ruthlessly broken by slaughters in the streets and by deportations to Siberia.

And on this occasion one can see the first incident of the present revolution. The Association of Zemstvos and the Association of Cities sent a joint committee direct to the Tsar, headed by Prince Lvov, with the threat that unless the government were liberalized the people would not remain loyal. The Tsar refused to receive the delegation – and dissolved the Duma.⁵

Immediately after that some steps were taken to reform the intendancy staff and reorganize the army. However, this impulse did not long persist. The reaction was again in power. Stürmer, a petty noble and a reactionary of the worst type, was appointed Premier, and after him Trepov, and after him Golytsin – all three either allied with or in the power of those 'dark forces' which began to be spoken of everywhere, in the meeting of the Council of Nobles as well as in the Duma. But the conduct of Protopopov as Minister of the Interior, was the final straw. Denounced by the Council of Nobles in December, the little group of intriguers of which Protopopov was the outward expression came in for a direct accusation by Rodzyanko at the meeting, in February, of the Russian Special Committee of Defence, and he was blamed for deliberately hindering the national effort and for creating a famine in the cities. The Tsar was petitioned, through the Minister of War, to give the matter his attention.

This action seemed for a time to have produced the required effect; but after the Duma had been sitting a week in its February session rioting for food again broke out. Upon this the Tsar issued a rescript dissolving the Duma. But the Duma refused to dissolve. And the next thing it knew it had the Russian Empire on its hands.

New York Tribune Magazine, 25 March 1917

NOTES

1. A republic was subsequently declared by Alexander Kerensky (Minister-President) and Alexander Zarudny (Minister of Justice) on behalf of the Provisional Government on 1 September 1917. In so doing they breached the principles of the agreement reached between the Petrograd Soviet and the Temporary Committee of the State Duma on 2 March, whereby the future form of the Russian state was to be determined by the Constituent Assembly.

2. 'Government Constituent': Reed refers here to a body comprising the Temporary Committee of Duma, the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet. There was no such body, though in the early days of the revolution a Contact Commission liaised between the Duma Committee and the Petrograd Soviet.
3. 'Black Hundreds': a term applied to certain extreme right-wing political associations or to their 'fighting organizations'. Formed in 1905 to oppose liberal and socialist reform, to defend the monarchy and the Russian Orthodox Church, and to uphold the primacy of the Great Russians within the Empire, the Union of the Russian People of A. I. Dubrovin and V. M. Purishkevich in particular was notorious for instigating violent attacks on socialists and liberals and for murderous anti-Semitic pogroms in Russia, Belorussia and the Ukraine. Some 'Black Hundred' organizations were subsidized by the police.
4. Milyukov's speech denouncing the Tsar's government was made in the Duma, 14 November 1916.
5. Nicholas did not 'dissolve' but prorogued the Fourth State Duma, on 10 March 1917.

2

Russia

I hate to set up as a prophet, but it seems to me I diagnosed the situation leading to the present revolution in Russia pretty well in my book, *The War in Eastern Europe*, published a year ago.

I quote from Part III:

For the last ten years Russia has become more and more a German commercial colony. Every embarrassment of Russia was taken advantage of by Germany to increase her trade advantages in the empire; as, for example, in 1905, German interests exacted enormous concessions by overt threats of aiding the revolutionists. The Germans also crept into government offices, even into the army administration. They dictated the plans of the Russian strategic railways on the German frontier. And in the Imperial Court, in the entourage of the Tsarina – herself a German – they exercised a sinister and powerful influence.

Russian merchants, manufacturers, and bankers have long bitterly opposed the German power in their country, and this has made them enemies of the corrupt and tyrannical Russian Government – which is bound up with the Germans – and allies of the revolutionists. So in this war we have the curious spectacle of the Russian proletariat and the middle class both intensely patriotic, and both opposing the government of their country. And to understand Russia now one must realize the paradox that to make war on Germany is to make war on the Russian Bureaucracy.¹

This is not the first manifestation of that internal struggle which has been going on in Russia since the very commencement of the war. In the summer and fall of 1915, the treachery of Sukhomlinov, Minister of War, of General Myasoedov; the dismissal of the Grand Duke Nicholas from command of the western armies; the wholesale corruption of the Intendancy; the traitorous activities of the Tsarina's German entourage; and the cynical ascendancy of the reactionary party, with wholesale deportations to Siberia, massacres

of Jews, and repression of the Duma – all this had forced the Liberal elements of the Russian people into a defensive alliance. Moreover, it was the scarcely-veiled purpose of the autocracy to make a separate peace with Germany, a move which was bitterly opposed by both the [proletariat and] the Russian middle class.²

In the face of the wholesale corruption of the purchasing department of the government, the Association of Zemstvos, or county councils, undertook to buy army supplies for the government – a job which it accomplished with real ability. This is an important fact, as the Association represented to a large extent the Russian middle class.

All this time the Duma, limited as it was, had been getting more and more frankly critical. For example, one speaker said that Russia had a government which was extraordinarily inefficient, extraordinarily corrupt, and extraordinarily traitorous. In addition, it began to name specific grafters and traitors and hinted where the trail led, and it recommended that committees of the Duma be put in charge of the buying of supplies, in conjunction with the Zemstvo, and also the manufacture of munitions. Besides all this, there was rapidly growing popular unrest manifested all over the empire. And it was the discontent of patriots that determined Russia should win the war.³

In September a premature revolution broke out in the form of a strike at the Putilov Armament Works at Petrograd which was ruthlessly suppressed. Thirty leaders were sent to Siberia, and many pickets shot in the streets. The Tsar suddenly dissolved the Duma. Widespread strikes of transport-workers, railroad and public service employees followed in Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, and other cities. The Association of Zemstvos and the Association of Cities sent a joint committee, headed by Prince Lvov (who is said to be the head of the new government), to the Tsar direct, threatening that unless he liberalized the Government they would favor revolution. The Tsar refused to receive this delegation.

Then the Allied censorship settled down on the situation, and I wrote:

Is there a powerful and destructive fire working in the bowels of Russia, or is it quenched? Rigid censorship and the suppression of news within the empire make it very difficult to know; but

even after the prorogation of the Duma there were wholesale dismissals of Intendancy officials, and a complete military reorganization of the western armies, and even as I write this same powerful, quiet menace, as yet vaguely defined, has forced the Tsar to reopen the Duma with Imperial pomp. And Boris Stürmer, the new premier, though a Reactionary of the worst type, has assured the Duma that 'Even in war time the work of internal organization must go on.'⁴

Since then Russia has swung back again to reaction, and through the shifting clouds of the censorship we have caught glimpses of the autocracy more and more tightening its hold. The result was inevitable.

I repeat that this is a middle-class revolution, led by business men, publishers, and the progressive country nobles. The army is with them, because they are in favor of continuing the war against Germany; the Duma, because they stand for untrammelled representative government; the workingmen, peasants and Jews, because they have proclaimed the most democratic program since the French Revolution. Some people may be skeptical of bourgeois promises; but it is a fact that the new Russian middle class has ideas which antedate the ideas of bourgeois Western Europe and America by a hundred years. If the Russian revolutionary program fails, indeed, it will be because the French and English middle classes are afraid to allow it, on the ground that it might interfere with the value of their Russian investments.

It is interesting to note that the powers that be in England and France have abandoned their policy of whitewashing Russia, of explaining how 'liberal' the Tsar's government was and of suppressing all news that reflected upon it. In the last few months these gentlemen have been strangely silent; and now we suddenly wake to find the taboo gone. That in itself is to me proof enough of the tremendous power of Russia's house-cleaning.

The Masses, May 1917

NOTES

1. John Reed, *The War in Eastern Europe* (New York, 1916) pp. 225-6.
2. Allegations that a 'separate peace' was being prepared were frequently

made by patriotic opponents of the autocracy between 1915 and 1917, notably against the Prime Minister I. L. Goremykin. However, these allegations have never been substantiated. See G. Katkov, *Russia 1917: The February Revolution* (London, 1967).

3. Reed, *War*, pp. 229–30. The ‘one speaker’ mentioned by Reed was Pavel Milyvkov, leader of the Constitutional Democrats, speaking in the Duma.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

3

The Russian Peace

[Written with Louise Bryant]

At this writing the bourgeois press is alarmed at the prospect of a Russian separate peace with Germany. The Council of Workingmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, which is the real revolutionary heart of the new Russia, grows stronger hourly as the power of the awakened proletariat bursts up through the veneer of capitalism smeared thinly over the face of things. And the Council of Workingmen's and Soldiers' Delegates wants peace.

Premier Milyukov sent a message to the Allies assuring them that Russia would fight until the Allied end. The Russian people responded with a demand for Miliukov's resignation, and the Council of Workingmen's and Soldiers' Delegates rebuked the Provisional Government by establishing its own Department of Foreign Affairs. Guchkov has resigned, then Miliukov.¹ It looks as if the Russian Peace were coming.

We make our apologies to the Russian proletariat for speaking of this as a 'bourgeois revolution'. It was only the 'front' we saw, the wished-for consummation of Kapitaltum. The real thing was the long-thwarted rise of the Russian masses, as now we see with increasing plainness; and the purpose of it is the establishment of a new human society upon the earth. For this, it is necessary that Russia have peace from without; indeed, every other consideration, whether of honor or profit, sinks into insignificance beside it.

The cumbersome medieval tyranny that ruled Russia has vanished like smoke before the wind. The bright framework of the complicated modern capitalistic tyranny that rules us all is crumbling from the face of Russia. And from the leaden sea of dumb and driven conscripts, the rivers of workers bent with hideous fatigue, the nations of mujiks mud-colored and voiceless, something is taking shape – something grand, and simple, and human. Do you remember in Dostoevsky's *Idiot*, where the boy prophesies about the Russia of the future – Russia with her gyves stricken off, Russia ruling the world with love?

What will follow the Russian peace? We profess to fear it, seeing nothing but the German victory, and with it the strengthening of German autocracy. To make Germany democratic, it is said, the German nation must be crushed. Kick her into self-government.

That seems fallacious to us. Whoever heard of a great civilized people bullied by outsiders into changing its form of government? Even Greece, with Venizelos set up as liberator by the Allied troops, is loyal to her weak king in the face of insults.

But what the Hohenzollerns need never fear from an Allied victory, deeply should they dread from the Russian Peace. To be a hard-driven military despotism in the shadow of a great free commonwealth – that is impossible. With Russia free, Russia at peace, autocracy disappears from Europe.

The Masses, July 1917

NOTE

1. Milyukov was Minister of Foreign Affairs, not Premier as Reed wrote, in the Provisional Government of Prince Lvov.

Following a government statement on 9 April 1917, which reflected the Petrograd Soviet's policy of 'peace without annexations or indemnities', on 1 May Milyukov sent a note to the Allied governments affirming that the Russian government remained committed to the war aims agreed by treaty. Following violent public protests, Kerensky obtained Miliukov's resignation.

Alexander Ivanovich Guchkov resigned as Minister of War and of the Navy on 15 May 1917, ostensibly in protest against the participation of representatives of the Soviets in the first coalition cabinet of the Provisional Government.

4

A Letter from John Reed

For five days the steamer has been lying quietly here in Halifax harbor while the British authorities go over her inch by inch – and over the passengers as well – looking for contraband, spies, or any person or thing which for any reason should not be allowed to go to Scandinavia now. To-day the examination was finished, and now we are only waiting permission from London to go to sea.

My shipmates are a strange blend of various sorts of Scandinavians, Russians, a knot of young college boys from the States going to Russia as clerks in the Petrograd branch of an American bank, a Hughes Republican who was born in Venezuela of Dutch parents and is the most patriotic man on board, and a few morose-looking foreigners who walk alone and talk to no one. Almost every one is suspicious of every one else, and rumors fly about that so-and-so is a German spy, another an American Socialist in disguise going to the Stockholm conference, and most of the steerage really IWW's.¹

To-day a trainload of Russians – most of them Jews – arrived from New York and came on board with wives, children, innumerable trunks and bundles, containing largely food and books. These the British sailors examined with painful care, even going through their pockets, for Russians, especially those from the United States, are considered dangerous since Charles Edward Russell brought back news of their baneful activities in undermining the Root mission in Russia.² Indeed, I have been told both by the Americans on board and by some of the British searchers here that if it hadn't been for the returning Russian-Americans the revolution would never have gone to the length it has.

In New York one must get the visa of the British consulate before the Russian consulate can visa his passport. If the British have any reason to suspect any one, a Russian passport is of no avail – nor an American one either: the suspected person may be taken off at Halifax. The same is true of cargo; although the American government may have granted permits and letters of assurance to export certain articles, the British authorities allow only such freight to

pass as they please. At the beginning of the war I remember the indignant protests of captains, owners and passengers at being held up and searched by the British; but now the neutral world has grown used to British domination of the sea, and it is considered perfectly natural that we should sail first to Halifax, and stay there as long as London wishes, without any explanation.

Is there any corner of the world where the Russian revolution has not been felt? Certainly not on the ships of this line, by which the first exiles returned to their beloved home, by which the first refugees, the first eyewitnesses of the tremendous event crossed to America. There is on board an American youth who was in Petrograd the whole wonderful 'eight days', but all he saw of it all was the spectacle of three mounted Cossacks firing on the police with revolvers in front of the Gare du Nord, several crowds of singing workmen marching up the Nevsky, the police station on fire, and the ruins of the Finland station. His main preoccupation was getting something to eat and trying to leave the city.

There is also a spry old gentleman, originally from Riga, who has lived in New York some thirty years and is now returning to see what the new Russia looks like. And a Russian diplomat, formerly attached to the Tsar's government, but now working for the new regime – whatever that may be by the time he gets home.

All these persons have widely divergent views of what the revolution means, how it occurred, and why, what future developments will be, and who is now in control. All the information they have had has come through the new Russian mission and embassy now in Washington, which everyone agrees does not in the slightest represent revolutionary Russia; through the American press, which is a good deal of a joke to Russians; and through the Root mission, which is spoken of politely but without enthusiasm.

We sit in the smoking-room evenings listening to the diplomat – whom I shall call Tamberley – talk of his fascinating country. He has a smooth-shaven, youngish face, with a tilted nose, which gives him a singular look of mild wonder. It is only when he gets excited – and he does that, like all Russians, when he warms to his subject – that his eyes narrow to cruel slits, and his cheekbones come out strongly, and he looks like Ghenghis Khan in white flannels.

'Ah, it was a marvelous life, the Russian life,' he said smoothly, smiling like a snake. 'At five one began to dine; the zakouska [cold buffet], the vodka setting fire to the head, beautiful woman,

wonderful food, talk . . . Then at ten the ballet, or the opera – often one could not get seats to the ballet from one year's end to the other, and I have paid one hundred and fifty roubles for a stall at the Marinsky – and after, at one, two, three in the morning, in a troika over the white snow, singing, out to see the gypsies . . . And back again home in the morning . . .'

'Yes,' the old Russian shook his head. 'But think of the other side. You spending in one night thousands of roubles, and in the miserable cellars of Petrograd the frightful poor moaning while the water from the Neva soaked through the walls . . .'

I looked at the aristocrat. His eyes were filled with tears. He said nothing.

'What do you really think of this revolution, anyway?' I asked him curiously.

'It was worthy of Russia,' he answered, seriously. 'If it had been done in another way I should be ashamed. I am not Socialist, I despise all those swarming, methodical democracies, like your country, where the mediocre comes to the top and beauty is always destroyed. But the Russian people, they have the art instinct. They have done it grandly, magnificently. They have made what the French call the *grand geste* – the grand gesture. It is all I care for in life. The ballet, the opera, the grand extravagances of the rich – what are these beside this epic? I am no proletarian – my family is one of the most ancient in Russia, but I am prouder now to be alive, to be Russian, than to be Tamberley . . .'

As I write this the Russian Jews down on the third-class deck, those Russian Jews who looked, as they came over the side, like an excursion from Henry Street, are gathered in an excited little close-packed group, there on the deck, below a man who is kneeling on the hatchway above them and holding out his arms. He waves his hands, and men and women begin to sing Russian songs – the old songs of harvest, of the boatmen on the Volga, the great, surging, hymnlike songs with upsweeping, strong chords that lift the heart. At once they cease to be Jews, to be persecuted, petty and ugly – that grand music transforms them, makes them grow and broaden, until they seem great, gentle, bearded moujiks, standing side by side with those who overthrew an empire – and perhaps a world.

The Masses, November–December 1917
(written August 1917)

NOTES

1. The IWW (Industrial Workers of the World, or 'Wobblies') was a militant American syndicalist labour union founded in 1905 and largely destroyed by mass arrests and vigilante action during and after the first World War. Reed knew and admired the Wobblies' leader, 'Big Bill' Haywood (1869–1926), and largely accepted the Wobblies' opposition to craft-based trade unionism on the model of the American Federation of Labor. Haywood jumped bail in 1921 and spent the remaining years of his life in Russia.
2. A mission headed by Elihu Root, a former Secretary of State, arrived in Petrograd on 13 June in a display of official American support for the Provisional Government, and to obtain assurances of the Provisional Government's commitment to continue participation in the war.

5

Letter to Sally Robinson

Petrograd, September 16

Dear Sally¹ –

This letter must do for all of you, as I can't write often. Louise and I are still well and happy, though food and rooms are unmercifully high, and probably will go higher. But we will soon leave this hotel and move into a private house. First a little information – which you probably have already, by the way. This revolution has now settled down to the class-struggle pure and simple, as predicted by the Marxians. The so-called 'bourgeois liberals', Rodzyanko, Lvov, Milyukov, et al., have definitely aligned themselves with the capitalist elements. (Except among scattered peasants and aristocrats I do not believe there is any considerable monarchist party in Russia, – although the Cadets would doubtless accept a monarchy if they couldn't get 'law and order' any other way.) The intellectuals and romantic revolutionists, except Gorky – whose paper *Novaya Zhizn*, was suppressed yesterday, and revived under the name *Svobodnaya Zhizn* – are shocked at what revolution really is, and either gone over to the Cadets, or quit. The old-timers – most of them – like Kropotkin, Breshkovskaya, even Aladin, are entirely out of sympathy with the present movement; their real concern was with a political revolution, and the political revolution has happened, and Russia is a republic, I believe, for ever – but what is going on now is an economic revolution, which they don't understand nor care for; the conquest of kaiserdum now seems to them the most important thing in the world.

Through the tempest of events tumbling over one another which is beating upon Russia, the Bolsheviks steadily rises. After the Kornilov affair, which has been interpreted by the government as a mere symptom of the almost universal desire of the reactionary elements, the Bolsheviks raised a great shout of 'I told you so', and while rallying to the defense of the revolution and the government, they openly said that the Kornilov affair was the result of weak policy of the government, and of the Soviet. Now the Workers and Soldiers Soviet, which also has gained immense

power since the Kornilov business, is the real government of Russia again, and the Bolshevik power in the Soviet is rising fast. Kerensky proposed to form another coalition ministry; the Soviet flatly refused to accept a ministry with any bourgeois in it. Kerensky resigned from the Socialist-Revolutionary party – last Friday – but both parties compromised on the directorate of five members who now are the government.² But the directorate is only temporary, until September 25, when the direction of affairs will be taken over by an all-Russian council, which is to rule until the calling of the Constitutional Assembly.³ Kerensky proposed a council of all elements in the nation, including bankers, capitalists, manufacturers, Cadet politicians, etc., as well as the democratic forces. The Soviet again refused, and drew up another scheme for a council, which the government has at present agreed to.

| | | |
|-----|-----------|---|
| 100 | delegates | All-Russian Soldiers and Workmens Soviet |
| 100 | " | All-Russian Peasants Soviet (Also sitting here) |
| 50 | " | provincial delegates S. W. S. |
| 50 | " | peasants' regional committees |
| 100 | " | labor unions |
| 84 | " | soldiers' committees at front |
| 150 | " | workmen's and peasants cooperatives |
| 20 | " | railroad employees. |
| 10 | " | post and telegraph employees |
| 20 | " | employees in commercial houses |
| 15 | " | liberal professions |
| 50 | " | provincial zemstvos |
| 59 | " | nationalist organizations (Ukrainians, etc.) |

The Soviet refuses to admit any 'bourgeois' or Cadet to the council; it says that there is enough bourgeois sentiment among the peasants, soldiers, commercial employees, zemstvos and liberal professions – any more would make the council preponderantly Cadet.

The Bolshevik program, contrary to most American information, is not anarchism. In short, it comes down to six demands:

The Soviet must assume entire power.

The land must be temporarily put in the hands of the peasants

committees for immediate provisional distribution and working
[letter ends here]

John Reed Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University

NOTES

1. Sally Robinson and her husband Boardman (1876–1952) were among Reed's closest friends in the *Masses* circle. He was born in Nova Scotia and studied art in Paris. After marrying Sarah Senter Whitney from San Francisco, he worked in New York as a social investigator for the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. Robinson became a political cartoonist for the *New York Tribune*, and was a frequent contributor to *The Masses*. He travelled to Europe with Reed in 1915 on assignment for the *Metropolitan*, and illustrated *The War in Eastern Europe* (1916). He joined the staff of *The Masses* after the 'artists' revolt' in 1916. One of Robinson's cartoons ('Making the World Safe for Capitalism'), portraying Elihu Root preparing a noose for the Petrograd Soviet, was cited in the prosecution of *The Masses* for violations of the Espionage Act. The Robinsons' home on Mount Airy Road, Croton, Connecticut, was near the cottage bought by Reed and Louise Bryant.
2. Following the Kornilov rebellion, Menshevik and PSR members of the Executive Committee of the Soviet insisted that the Provisional Government should accept some kind of public accountability and convened a Democratic Conference. Kerensky therefore suspended his plans for a third coalition cabinet and from 14 September to 10 October governed with the aid of a Directory consisting of M. I. Tereshchenko (Foreign Affairs), A. M. Nikitin (Posts and Telegraphs), General A. I. Verkhovsky (War) and Rear-Admiral C. N. Verderevsky (Navy).
3. On 3 October the predominantly Menshevik and PSR Democratic Conference agreed to form an 'All-Russian Democratic Council' of about 300 members before which the Provisional Government should be accountable pending the convening of the Constituent Assembly. This Council met only once (on 6 October) before it was expanded to include representatives of the Cadet Party and of public organizations, and on 15 October the third coalition approved the statute of a new body with reduced powers and 555 members, now titled the Provisional Council of the Russian Republic. This 'Pre-Parliament' met on 20 October. The Bolsheviks, though divided on the question, attended only to denounce the institution and to withdraw. The Pre-Parliament was dissolved by the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet on 7 November 1917. Reed is here referring to the 'All-Russian Democratic Council'.

6

Letter to Boardman Robinson

Petrograd, Hotel Angleterre, September 17 [1917]

Dear Mike –

For a few days, until we can find cheaper lodgings – and they are scarce – we are hanging out here in the old dump. They were certainly astonished to see the entry of one who vanished from these portals in the hands of the fourth arm. Of course things are frightfully dear here now, even with the rouble at fourteen cents, the bread is black and soggy, sugar is almost nix, and there is only watery milk once every ten days or so.

The old town has changed! Joy where there was gloom, and gloom where there was joy. We are in the middle of things, and believe me it's thrilling. There is so much dramatic to write that I don't know where to begin – but I'll have a tale to unfold if ever . . . For color and terror and grandeur this makes Mexico look pale. We hope to go all over Russia sooner or later.

No one here remembers me except the sour-bellied American correspondents and a guy in the American consulate who was here in our time. The rest are all new, and very cordial. I went with Louise to see Bruce¹ today at the British Embassy, but he was very upper-class, not even asking us to sit down in the hall. I don't think we'll go again. He sends you his warmest. He, however, like all diplomats, all the newspapermen, and all the foreigners except us thinks that this revolution is [in] the worst possible taste. It is a grand situation. But believe me, I am getting a wonderful welcome, and have thousands of comrades already.

Tell Max [Eastman] that it is of the utmost that I stay here four or five months at least. I sent him three stories and an interview from Stockholm. My money will last about two months more, and without any travelling either.

I've written my mother, but am afraid perhaps it won't get through. Will you please send her a line at Wickersham apts.,

Portland, Ore. to say I'm O. K.? Louise sends best to both.
Jack.

John Reed Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University

NOTE

1. When Reed and Boardman Robinson were in deep trouble in Petrograd in 1915, and found the American Embassy frigidly unhelpful, Robinson appealed to H. J. 'Benjie' Bruce (1880–1951), who was successively second secretary and then first secretary and Head of Chancery in the British Embassy, Petrograd. His intervention enabled them to leave Russia.

7

A Visit to the Russian Army

I

The bearer of this, *John Reed*, known to the Cultural-Publicity office of the Political Department of the Ministry of War as a member of the *American Socialist Party*, is authorized to proceed to the active army to gather information for the North American Press . . .

Observation: To the Commissar belongs the right to recall agitators and propagandists.

Surely never stranger passport carried correspondent to the front, opened all doors, made the commandant of the Baltic station set aside a separate first-class compartment for the 'American Mission', as he called us. An Orthodox priest, bound on volunteer priestly duty to the trenches, humbly begged the honor of travelling in our company. He was a big, healthy man, with a wide, simple Russian face, a gentle smile, an enormous reddish beard, and an insatiable desire for conversation.

'*Eto Verno!* It's true!' he said, with the suspicion of a sigh. 'The revolution has weakened the hold of the church on the masses of the people. Some say that we served the old regime – that we "blessed the gallows" of the revolutionary martyrs. But I remember in 1905, when thirteen sappers were executed for mutiny, no priest would administer the last rites. How could we speak consol-ing words to a man about to be murdered?

'Some have lost all faith, but the great masses are still very religious – even though extreme revolutionaries. On the caps of the reserves used to be a cross and the words, "*Za veru, tsarya, i otechestvo* – For faith, Tsar, and fatherland.'" Well, they scratched out the "faith" along with the rest . . .' He shook his head. 'In the old text of the church prayers God was referred to as "Tsar of Heaven", and the Virgin as "Tsarina". We've had to leave that out

– the people wouldn't have God insulted, they say . . .'

We went on to speak of his work in the armies, and his face grew infinitely tender.

'During regimental prayer the priest prays for peace to all nations. Whereupon the soldiers cry out, "Add 'without annexations or indemnities!'" Then we pray for all those who are travelling, for the sick and the suffering; and the soldiers cry. "Pray also for the deserters!" Simple-minded children! They think that God must grant anything if it is included in a regular prayer by a regularly ordained priest. Woe to the priest who refuses to pray the soldiers' prayer!' He mused for a moment:

'But the soldiers are not pious when they are not in danger. It is only before an attack that they come crowding to me to confess themselves, often weeping, who beg me to pray the good God for their souls. We Russians have a proverb – "The Russian man won't cross himself until it thunders"'. . .

We talked of the great Church Congress at Moscow,¹ the first since Peter the Great, with its convocation of the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Athens, Alexandria and Jerusalem, the Metropolitans of the Russian cities, the Archbishops from Japan, Persia, Rumania, Turkestan, all in a ferment of democratic revolt; and of the innumerable Russian sects – Doukhobors, Molochani, Baptists, Dyrnicki or 'Holers', who must have a hole in the roof of their tabernacle for the Holy Ghost to descend through. Williams my American companion, told of a Volga peasant, who attributed the ills of Russia to the sinful practice of crossing oneself with three fingers – he being an Old Believer,² and using only two . . . And the priest explained to us how the rites of the Orthodox Church were designed to symbolize different stages in the life and passion of Christ, and how no woman, even a girl-child being baptized, was permitted at the altar.

At every station the train made a long halt to allow the passengers time for many glasses of tea and a great gulping of food, in the cheerful, steamy clatter of crowded waiting rooms. In between times utter strangers, officers and civilians, drifted in, and our converse was of curious matters.

The evening papers announced that Martov and the Menshevik-Internationalists had formally broken with the Tsereteli-Liber-Dan group, because of their 'hesitating policy of compromise'.³

Tsereteli, Dan, Liber, Gots, and Chkheidze are the Girondins of

our time,' said one young captain who spoke French. 'And they will share the fate of the Gironde. I am with them,' he added.

The priest lived in Tashkent, in the Trans-Caspia, where he had a wife and five children. He told about the singular institution of the Thieves' Bureau, where persons who had been robbed could go and recover their property by paying its value, less 20 per cent, discount for cash. A thin little school-teacher described the Thieves' Convention held in Rostov-on-Don this summer with delegates from all over Russia, which despatched a formal protest to the Government against the rapacity and venality of the police. And a fat *polkovnik* spoke of the Convention of German and Austrian Prisoners of War, in Moscow, which demanded the eight-hour workday – and got it!

Rumor had it that the armies at the front would leave the trenches and go home for the feast of *Pakrov*, the first of October – then only four days off. Each one was concerned about this immense threat of dissolution. . . . The priest had been present at two meetings of regimental Soviets, where bitter resolutions had been passed. Some one had the official newspaper of the Eighth Army soldiers' committees, with an obscure account of military riots at Gomel. The Lettish troops were also stirred up. What if the millions of Russian soldiers were simply to stop fighting and start for the cities, for the capital, for their villages? The old *polkovnik* muttered, 'We are lost. Russia is defeated. And besides life is so uncomfortable now that it is not worth living. Why not finish everthing?' With whom the French-speaking officer, revolutionists by theory, debated hotly but courteously. The priest told a very simple Rabelaisian story about a soldier who seduced a peasant girl by promising that her child would be a general. . . .

It grew late, the lights were dim and intermittent, and there was no heat in the car. The priest shivered. 'Well,' he said finally, his teeth chattering, 'it is too cold to stay awake!' And with that he lay down just as he was without any covering but his long skirts, and immediately fell to snoring. . . .

Very early in the morning we awoke, stiff and numb. The sun sparkled through the frosty windows. A small boy came through with tea – chocolate candy in place of sugar. The train was poking down across rich Estland, through white birch forests glorious with yellow autumn foliage like bright flame; sometimes clumps of sombre pines, with the birch leaves breaking through as if the whole woods were on fire; long, gently-rolling waves of opulent

farm land, yellow wheat stubble, emerald green grass still, and the pale blue-green of miles of cabbages; and immense farm-houses set in the midst of barns, the whole covered with one great thatched roof, on which thick moss was growing. On the slow rises of country, huge gray-stone windmills, weathered and mossy, whirled their agitated sails. Along the track marched a new road-bed, with the ties in places at many points, and piles of rails.

Before the revolution no effort had been made to construct this badly-needed track – since March, however, the Russians had completed twenty-six versts of it; but the Germans, in the one month since the fall of Riga, had built more than thirty miles.

Soldiers began to thicken, at all stations, in barns and farm-houses far seen; gigantic bearded men in dun coats, boots, peaked caps or shaggy *shapkis*, almost always with a touch of red somewhere about them. Patrols of Cossacks rode along the roads deep in black mud. Military trains, all box-cars with masses of men on top and inside, clanked past with broken echoes of mass-singing. The Red Cross flag made its appearance. At Valk an excited sub-officer said we must go up into the town and get passes before proceeding further. The conductor announced that the train would leave in three minutes.

‘You will be arrested. You will be arrested!’ cried the sub-officer, shaking his finger at me. But we sat still, and no one ever again spoke of passes.

At Venden, beyond which no trains go, we disembarked in a swirling mob of soldiers going home. A sentry at the door was tired of examining passes and just motioned us wearily through. No one seemed to know where the Staff headquarters was; finally an officer, after some thought, said he thought the Staff had retired to Valk. ‘But you don’t want the Staff,’ he added, ‘the Iskosol is in charge of things here.’ And he pointed to the town’s chief building, formerly the Convention of Justices of the Peace, where sat the ‘Iskosol’, or Central Executive Committee of the Soldiers’ Deputies.

In a large bare room on the second floor, amid the clack of busy stenographers and the come-and-go of couriers, deputations, functioned the nerve-center of the Twelfth Army, the spontaneous democratic organization created by the soldiers at the outbreak of the Revolution. A handsome young lieutenant, with Jewish features, stood behind a table, running his hand through his gray-streaked hair worriedly, while a torrent of agitated complaint beat upon him. Four delegations from the regiments in the trenches,

mostly soldiers, with a couple of officers mixed in, were appealing to the Iskosol all at once; one regiment was almost without boots – the Iskosol had promised six hundred pairs and had only delivered sixty; a very ragged private spokesman for another committee, complained that the artillery had been given their winter fur coats, but the cavalry was still in summer uniform. . . . One sub-officer, a mere boy, kept shouting angrily that the Iskosol buzzed around a good deal, but nothing seemed to be accomplished. . . .

'*Da, da!*' replied the officer vaguely. 'Yes, yes. *Seichas, seichas*. [At once.] I will write immediately to the Commissar . . .'

On a little table were piled heaps of pamphlets and newspapers, among which I noticed Élisée Reclus' *Anarchy and the Church*. A soldier sat in a broken chair nearby, reading aloud the *Izvestiya*, official organ of the Petrograd Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviets – about the formation of the new government; and as he declaimed the names of the Cadet ministers, the listeners gave vent to laughter and ironical 'hoorah's'. Near the window stood Voitinsky, assistant Commissar of the Twelfth Army, with his semi-military coat buttoned up to his chin – a little man whose blue eyes snapped behind thick glasses, with bristling red hair and beard; he who was a famous exile in Siberia, and the author of *Smertniki* [The Condemned], a book more terrible than *Seven Who Were Hanged* . . .

These Commissars are civilians, suggested by the revolutionary Commissars of the French revolutionary government in 1793; chief representatives of the Provisional Government at the front, appointed by the Government with the approval of the Soviets.

In precise, short sentences Voitinsky explained that military operations were not his province, unless he was consulted; but he had just that day come to Venden at the request of a general to decide a question of tactics.

'My job,' he said, 'is to build a military machine which will retake Riga. But conditions here are desperate. The army lacks everything – food, clothes, boots, munitions. The roads are awful, and it has been raining steadily for two weeks. The horses of the transport are underfed and worn out, and it is all they can do to haul enough bread to keep us from starving. But the most serious lack at the front, more serious than the lack of food and clothes, is the lack of boots, pamphlets and newspapers. You see, since the revolution the army has absorbed tons of literature, propaganda, and has a gnawing hunger; and now all that is cut off. We not only

permit, but encourage the importation of all kinds of literature in the army – it is necessary in order to keep up the spirits of the troops. Since the Kornilov affair,⁴ and especially since the Democratic Congress,⁵ the soldiers have been very uneasy. Yes, many have simply laid down their arms and gone home. The Russian army is sick of war . . .’

Voitinsky had had no sleep for thirty-six hours. Yet he fairly radiated quick energy as he saluted and ran down the steps to his mud-covered automobile – bound on a forty-mile ride through the deep mud, in the shadow of the coming rainstorm, to judge a dispute between officers and soldiers.

Growling and grumbling the regimental delegations went their way, and the Jewish subaltern, whose name was Tumarkin, led us into another room and passed around cigarettes while he recounted the history of the Iskosol.

It was the first revolutionary organization of soldiers in active service.

‘You see,’ said Tumarkin, ‘the row in Petrograd took us by surprise. Of course we knew that sooner or later . . . but it came all of a sudden, as such things do. There were a crowd of us revolutionists in the army – I myself was a political exile in France when the war broke out.

‘Well, in the revolution of 1905 there was established a Soviet of Workmen in Petrograd, and we tried to make one in the army, at various places. But the masses of the soldiers were ignorant of Socialist ideas, and indifferent – so we failed then. Afterward we realized our mistake, and began to work on the army; but in March, 1917, when things broke loose in Peter, we were scared. We thought they might send us to suppress the revolution. So we hastily met, about a dozen of us, and started to win over the army . . .

‘News from Petrograd was rare and contradictory. Our own staff officers were hostile. We didn’t know if the revolution was winning or not . . . For a week we hurried from place to place, holding soldiers’ meetings, explaining, arguing; and at every meeting we made the men pass a resolution swearing that they would face death for the revolution.

‘On March 21, just eleven days after the outbreak in the capital, we got together a Soviet of the army in Riga – one delegate from each company, battery and squadron – three thousand in all. They elected an Executive Committee of sixty men, which began to

establish communications with other revolutionary military organizations. Most of the time we didn't know even if there *were* any other bodies like ours, but simply telegraphed to "Revolutionary Soldiers, Fourth Army" – like that. And for signature we made a code-word of the first three syllables of our organization's name – "Is-ko-sol". All the other Executive Committees call themselves "Armikom".

Three days after organizing we began to publish our paper, *Russkii Front*. What a job it was, to educate, to organize! The officers didn't understand the revolution – they had been trained to a caste apart; but there was no killing of officers in this army. Only expulsions . . . Before we left Riga the *Russkii Front* had a circulation of 25,000 among the soldiers, and 5,000 in the city; to support it we proclaimed a Contribution Day for the Soldiers' Press and raised 58,000 roubles . . .'

The Iskosol is only one typical manifestation of the immense fertility of representative organization, a thousand times duplicated, which pervades Russian military and civil life now. It is primarily the organ by which the soldiers of the Twelfth Army take part in the furious new political life of the country; but in the chaos left by the break-down of the old regime, it has been forced to assume extraordinary functions. For example: The Iskosol fulfills the duties of commissariat department; it attempts to reconcile differences between officers and men; conducts primary and secondary schools among all bodies of troops in repose or reserve; and in certain cases, like the retreat from Riga, where the commanding staff was utterly demoralized, takes actual command of the troops. Its members are scattered throughout the army, sent from place to place during engagements, encouraging, inspiring, leading . . .

Beneath it is an intricate system of committees – in each company, regiment, brigade, division, corps – half political, half military, and all elected by the soldiers, with representatives in each higher committee – the whole finally culminating in the Little Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, one delegate from each regiment, which meets about once a month – and the Big Soviet, five from each regiment, whose sessions are less frequent, and whose Executive Committee, elected every three months, forms the Iskosol. The Iskosol has three delegates in the Central Committee of the All-Russian Soviets at Petrograd, and one man attached to the Army Staff.

But that is not all. The passion for democratic expression and the swiftness of revolutionary events has given birth to other organizations. Three months ago, when the Iskosol was elected, there was very little Bolshevik sentiment in the Twelfth Army; but since the Kornilov affair the masses of soldiers are largely Bolshevik. Now the Iskosol has no Bolshevik members, and the Iskosol is predominantly *oboronets* – in favor of continuing the war to victory. So forty-three regiments have formed a new central body of Bolshevik delegates, called the Left Bloc, which also has representatives in Petrograd.

And then there are the Letts. There are nine Lettish regiments in the army, the most desperate fighters – since they are fighting for their own homes, and the great majority of these are revolutionary social democrats. Although represented in the Iskosol, they have their own central body also, the 'Iskostrel', or Central Committee of the Lettish 'Strelniki' – Sharp-shooters. Over the Iskostrel is still a higher body, the 'Iskolat' – Central Committee of the Lettish Soviet of Soldiers, Workers, and Landless Farm-workers. As all over Russia this district or province Soviet is fed by innumerable small Soviets in every village, town and city, and has its delegates in the All-Russian Central body at Petrograd. The landless farm-laborers, however, who are a real agricultural proletariat, in Estland replace the peasants of the other Russian provinces; and the Russian Soviet of the district is composed only of soldiers, as there are neither Russian workmen nor Russian peasants in Livonia.⁶

There is still another organization, called the Nationalist Bloc, composed of Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Finns and various others of the fifty-seven peoples of Russia whose purpose is to agitate for separation of various degrees . . .

And it is a characteristic of this extraordinary complex, multiple system of elective organizations, working feverishly and often at cross-purposes, that it throws off among its other forms of expression a prodigious amount of literature. The Iskosol publishes *Russkii Front*, the Soviet another paper called *Bulletin of the Soldiers' Delegates*; from the Left Bloc comes *Golos XII Armii*; the Nationalist Bloc has its own organ; the Iskostrel runs the daily *Latwju Strelniks*, and before the fall of Riga there were besides three papers of as many Social Democrat factions, one of the Socialist Revolutionists, and a fifth of the Populist party – besides all the regular pre-revolutionary journals of Riga and most of these have again sprung up in the little Lettish towns among the gun positions.

Added to all these are the Petrograd papers, especially Gorky's *Novaya Zhizn* and the Bolshevik *Soldat* and *Rabochii Put*, and all the others whose endless names escape me, which are poured into the army zone by the hundreds of millions.

And all this terrible eagerness for self-government and for self-expression is working as much in all the Russian armies, everywhere along a thousand miles of front, among twelve million men suddenly free from tyranny . . .

Tumarkin was telling us how the Iskosol sent its own delegates to Baku for oil, to the Volga to buy or commandeer wheat, up into Arkhangelsk Government for timber, and how it ordered guns and ammunition from the big munitions works in Petrograd. Just then the door opened and a frowzled head peeked in, followed by a dirty, bearded face. 'I am lost!' groaned Tumarkin. Immediately the room seemed full of sullen-looking soldiers; spokesmen of delegations began:

'I represent,' said he of the face, 'the cooks of the 26th Division. We haven't any more wood – the soldiers want us to tear down the farmhouses to make fires for cooking their meals –'

The next soldier elbowed his way to the front, spurs clinking. The horses of the cavalry were dying of hunger. No hay . . . Tears welled up in his eyes, he had seen his own horse fall down in the road. . . .

'Here!' cried the unhappy Tumarkin, holding out a paper to us. 'This is a proclamation we printed in the Soldiers' Press the day Riga fell. The shells were bursting around the office while we set type. Volunteers pasted it up on the walls and posts all over the city –' And he was swallowed up.

The proclamation was in German.

The Executive Committee of the Russian Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies of the Twelfth Army to the German Soldiers.

German Soldiers!

The Russian soldiers of the Twelfth Army draw your attention to the fact that you are carrying on a war for autocracy against revolution, freedom and justice. The victory of Wilhelm will be death to democracy and freedom. We withdraw from Riga, but we know that the forces of the revolution will ultimately prove themselves more powerful than the force of cannons. We know that in the long run your conscience will overcome everything, and that the German soldiers, with the Russian revolutionary

army, will march to the victory of freedom. You are at present stronger than we are but yours is only the victory of the brute force. The moral force is on our side. History will tell that the German proletarians went against their revolutionary brothers, and they forgot the international working-class solidarity. This crime you can expiate only by one means. You must understand your own and at the same time the universal interests, and strain all your immense power against imperialism, and go hand in hand with us – toward life and freedom!

Outside it was raining, and the mud of the streets had been tracked on the sidewalks by thousands of boots until it was difficult to walk. The city was darkened against hostile aeroplanes; only chinks of light gleamed from shutters, and blinds glowed dull red. The narrow street made unexpected turns. In the dark we hurtled incessant passing soldiers, spangled with cigarette-lights. Close by passed a series of great trucks, some army-transport, rushing down in the black gloom with a noise like thunder, and a fan-like spray of ooze. Right before me someone scratched a match, and I saw a soldier pasting a white paper on a wall. Our guide, one of the Iskosol, gave an exclamation and ran up, flashing an electric torch. We read:

Comrade soldiers!

The Venden Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies has arranged for Thursday, September 28, at 4 o'clock in the park a MEETING. *Tovarishch* Peters, of the Central Committee of the Lettish Social Democratic party, will speak on:

'The Democratic Congress and the Crisis of Power.'

The Iskosol man was sputtering. 'That meeting is forbidden,' he cried. 'The commandant has forbidden it!' The other man spat. 'The commandant is a damn bourgeois,' he remarked. 'This Peters is Bolshevik,' argued our friend. 'Meetings are not allowed in the zone of war. That is the rule. The Iskosol has forbidden this meeting.' But the soldier only grinned maliciously. 'The Iskosol too is bourgeois,' he answered, and turned away. 'We want to hear about this Democratic Congress.'

At the little hotel the proprietor, half hostile, half greedy-frightened, said that there were no rooms.

'How about that room?' asked our friend, pointing.

'That is the commandant's room,' he replied, gruffly.

'The Iskosol takes it,' said the other. We got it.

It was an old Lettish peasant woman who brought us tea, and peered at us out of her bleary eyes, rubbing her hand and babbling German. 'You are foreigners,' she said, 'glory to God. These Russians are dirty folk, and they do not pay.' She leaned down and hoarsely whispered: 'Oh, if the Germans would only hurry. We respectable folk all want the Germans to come here!'

And through the shut wooden blinds, as we settled down to sleep, we could hear the far-off thud-booming of the German cannon hammering on the thin, ill-clad, underfed Russian lines, torn by doubts, fears, distrust, dying and rotting out there in the rain because they were told that the Revolution would be saved thereby . . .

II

In the Iskosol automobile, painted war-gray, we slipped down the hill out of Venden, through its German-looking medieval streets, thronged with masses of soldiers, past a long train of bullock-carts coming back empty from the direction of the front. At the edge of the village a regiment was swinging up, headed by its band playing the Russian *Marseillaise*, and a great flag all red, with gold letters, 'Peace and Liberty'. The soldiers were coming out of the bloody trenches. They had marched thirty miles through mud. To the great sweep of the revolutionary music they tramped stiffly, arms swinging with the peculiar motion of the Russian infantry, heads thrown up and back, grey, gaunt faces strained and stern. A forest of tall bayonets swayed above them, and they choked the narrow street – a torrent of mud-colored humanity. The coats of several were in rags – some were walking in bare feet. The window in a house wall high-up swung open, and a yellow-haired girl leaned out, laughed and waved . . .

It rained, as it had rained steadily, monotonously, for days; as it would probably go on raining for weeks . . . The Jewish lieutenant who went with us was pouring out scraps, odds and ends of interesting information. He told how the Jews had always been forced to serve in the ranks, but that since the Revolution thousands had become officers . . . although many preferred to stay in the ranks because shoulder-straps are distrusted by the soldiers.

Before the Revolution the soldiers only received 65 kopeks (now about thirteen cents), per month – but now they got seven and a half roubles (a dollar and a half), every thirty days; and out of that they often had to buy food . . . Then there was the question of decorations, the various degrees of the Orders of St Ann, St Vladimir, and St George, the last of which carry with them certain small money payments. Before the Revolution these crosses were bestowed by a council of superior officers, as emanating from the Emperor; now they were given by acclamation by an assembly of the soldiers. These were only slight details indicating the profound change that had taken place in all the relations of military life.

He also spoke of the retreat from Riga, adding to the sinister story the events he himself had witnessed. 'In the rout,' he said, 'the army hadn't the least idea what to do. The staff completely lost its head, as it did at Tarnopol. For three days it disappeared, leaving only general orders to retreat, and scattered along the roads, each officer for himself. It was the *Iskosol* which decided to defend our main positions, and we set up headquarters here in Venden and organized the military resistance on our own responsibility. It was bad enough before,' he went on, 'but since Riga the soldiers refuse to obey any general staff orders unless counter-signed by us . . . But it works not badly.'

Now we were bumping along the wide, bleak Pskov chaussée, originally paved with cobbles, but pitted and torn by the passage of armies, and deep in mud. Straight and powerful it plunged directly southwest, to the lines – and beyond to Riga – over the rolling country. Peasants, mostly kerchiefed women who grinned cheerfully as we passed, were carelessly dumping stones and dirt on the broken places. An endless succession of trucks and wagon-trains went by, cavalry with long lances and rifles slung cross-wise on their backs, squads of infantry straggling along, single soldiers. One drove a cow, on which he had hung his rifle and a sack of carrots. There were wounded men, with arms tied in bloody rags. Many were barefoot in the cold ooze. Almost all bore upon their uniforms somewhere a spot of red; and everyone seemed to have a newspaper in his pocket or his hand.

We turned south off the main highway for a few miles over a road built of tree-trunks laid side by side, corduroy, through deep pine forests to the little village where the *Shtab Korpus* [corps headquarters] has its headquarters. In the *dacha* of some long-vanished land-owner the officers of the staff welcomed us, but

after glancing at our Socialist credentials, they cooled perceptibly, and did not even offer a glass of tea – which is about as near an insult as a Russian can get. However, the twenty-two year old captain who went with us soon began to talk with Russian expansiveness, telling many things he doubtless should not have told.

‘Between ourselves,’ he said, ‘we all think that there was treason in the fall of Riga. Of course we were terribly overweighted by the German heavy artillery and the army was torn by all sorts of bad feeling between men and officers. But even then . . . You remember at the Moscow Conference when General Kornilov said: “Must we lose Riga to awaken the country to a sense of its peril?” Well, the retreat from Riga began at the same time as the Kornilov attempt.’⁷

‘After the first withdrawal of the 186th Division beyond the Dvina, all the army received general orders to retreat – not to any particular point, but simply to retreat. Then the staff disappeared for days. There was a panic. The Iskosol was trying to stop the flight. On the Pskov chaussée just north of here I came upon disorganized fragments of the Seventh Division in disorder. An officer showed me the written orders from the staff – simply this – “Go north and turn to the left!”’

In the deep woods muddy soldiers were digging pits and building log huts half-underground, covering the roots with dirt and branches – for winter quarters. All through this back country soldiers swarmed. Each patch of forest was full of artillery-limbers and horses, squadrons of cavalry bivouacked under the trees, and in the sullen downpour thin curls of blue smoke mounted straight up into the cold, quiet air. Again we were speeding along the great Pskov road, through the rich, fertile country of the Estland barons – those powerful German landowners, the most reactionary in all Russia. Great estates extended on both sides of the road, solid miles of fields lately plowed or yellow-green with abandoned crops; forests, deep green pines or flaming birches; lakes, pools, rivers; and the ample farmhouses of rich peasants, or chateaux of the local lords. Occasionally soldiers would be working in the fields. The Association of Zemstvos had plowed and planted all the Baltic provinces so that this year’s harvest would feed the army and leave a million poods over – now almost fallen into German hands.

Whole acres of cabbages were rotting yellow, untouched, and

fields of beets and carrots were washed out by the rain. The ostentatious country houses stood roofless, burnt; the peasant homesteads had their windows smashed, and trails of loot led in all directions. And over the silent country, waste and empty, only immense flocks of rooks wheeled screaming in the rain, the throbbing mutter of far-off battle sounded, and the only human life was the hysterical life of an army in battle . . .

Off to the right a quarter-mile across the plain, the village of Ziegewald was being bombarded. Unseen, unheralded except by the muffled boom of cannons miles away, the shells came whining down out of the gray sky, and house after house heaved up and burst apart in splinters and black smoke. Our automobile turned in and entered the village. Only a block away some unseen thing roared suddenly and tore a building apart – the air was full of bricks. Down the street some peasants stood at the door of their hut, a bearded man and a woman with a baby in her arms, quietly watching. A few soldiers went nonchalantly across the fields, hands in pockets, more interested in us than the shelling. Almost into it we drove, and then turned off to the left. The captain was laughing. Right behind us, where we had passed, a jagged pit opened in the road. Shrapnel began to burst . . .

Along a deserted road only used at night – for it was in sight of the enemy – we crept beside a cedar hedge, while over our heads the hurtling shells went whistling, high up. Half a mile behind, over to the right, a Russian six-inch battery fired methodically at some unseen target, so far away that the explosions were barely audible. Through a farm we went, between a big house and a stone barn, both rootless and peopled with soldiers and field-kitchens; and along an open field to the wooded heights above the river Aa, where lay the Russian first-line trenches.

Like grotesque, mud-colored monsters the Russian soldiers crawled from their bomb-proofs to look us over – gaunt, drab-faced creatures, dressed in outlandish combinations of odds and ends of military and civilian clothes, their feet wrapped in rags. Since we were with officers they were sullenly suspicious, and demanded papers. Through the trees we could see the opposite bluffs where the Germans lay hidden – but it was still raining steadily, drearily, and there seemed to be a tacit agreement between both sides not to shoot.

A bearded soldier came up, wearing the red arm-band of the soldiers' committee.

'Any news from Petrograd?' he asked the captain, without saluting. All the others crowded around. The captain answered that he himself had not seen the papers. 'Huh!' grunted the other, and turned slowly to us. 'If these are Americans,' he went on, 'ask them why their country refused to endorse the Russian peace terms. Tell them that this is prolonging the war; that thousands of Russian men are dying because of it.'

Half a mile further along we stood in front of the company commander's dug-out while he spoke to the captain in low tones of the desperate situation. The soldiers had been saying that soon they would go home; regiments of four thousand men had been reduced to one thousand; there was not enough food, clothes, boots; they had been in the trenches for months, without relief; they did not trust their officers.

'Tell them in America,' cried a soldier, 'that we are not cowards! We did not run away from Riga without fighting. Three-quarters of us are dead . . .'

'True! True!' muttered others, crowding around. A voice shouted, 'Riga was betrayed!' There was silence.

Now the rain had at last ceased, in the western sky the towering clouds moved and broke through to blue gold. The rich green land steamed. Birds sang. A group of soldiers stood looking up to heaven with haggard and apprehensive faces; for with good weather the firing begins. Indeed, almost immediately came the faint high drone of an aeroplane, like a wasp, and we saw it slowly circling up above the trees. All around us the soldiers began scattering to their trenches. Rifles cracked. Behind us the Russian batteries gave tongue, and on the pale sunny sky flowered shrapnel.

'Useless!' The captain shrugged. 'We have no anti-aircraft guns, no aeroplanes. The Twelfth Army is blind.'

Overhead the thing soared low, running along the lines, and on its painted armor the sun glanced dully. Guns roared now all over the country; shells burst before and behind it, but it glided on lightly, contemptuously. From the woods they shouted hoarse insults and fired.

'Come on,' said the captain. 'Let's get out of here. They are going to shell this place. . . .'

We had got up the hill behind the gutted farmhouse when it began – the far thud-thud-thud of German three-inch guns, followed by sharp explosions in groups of three, over the place where we had stood. Rifle fire began pricking along the nervous miles.

Batteries far and near, concealed in copses, behind old walls, spoke to each other and replied. Invisible missiles wove in the sky a tapestry of deadly sound. The aeroplane swooped and circled alone, humming.

Behind us as we went, all the west turned swiftly golden-red, pouring sunset up the sky, and the clouds piled up in ruins like a city on fire. In the clear yellow-green between a star began to burn, and below it a sausage-shaped German observation balloon crawled slowly up and hung there, sinister, like an eye . . . Night fell. The fire freshened, pricking and crashing everywhere. Birds sang sleepy songs. A flock of rooks wheeled around a windmill wrecked by artillery. From far-off came the feverish stutter of a machine-gun.

Back through Ziegewald, in the quiet dusk filled again with vague human shapes which moved among the ruins, and along the Pskov road through the blasted country, so empty and yet so full of unnatural life. The stars were out. It was cold. Behind us the battle fell away. Fires twinkled over the plain, in the woods, fires of soldiers, fires of refugees who camped there, many of them without blankets, because the towns were crowded. Echoes of those choruses floated to us, of songs about home and lovers, of peace and harvest – and Revolution. Our headlights picked out details of the miserable interminable procession – the homeless, the wounded, the weary, those with naked feet, patrols, reliefs . . .

The captain was giving concise details about the state of things. Every regiment had lost at least 60 per cent of its strength. Companies normally of 250 men had now less than 100. Battalion commanders now were at the head of regiments; regimental commanders of divisions; he himself, nominally the captain of a company, now commanded a battalion. He had been gravely wounded four times.

As for politics, the captain laughingly protested that he had none. He was just an amused onlooker, he said. 'What will come will come. To me, a philosopher, life is always the same. *Nichego*. [Never mind.] After all, external events do not matter . . .'

* * *

Back in Venden. . . . The day before we had seen a notice of a Bolshevik meeting. *Tovarishch* Peters was to speak. The commandant had forbidden it. But we learned that it had taken place after

all. The Iskosol sent word that it must not be held, but the Iskosol was disregarded. The commandant of the town sent dragoons – but the dragoons stayed to the meeting.

The open market-place was thronged with soldiers, and with the few peasants who still remained in the surrounding country. The peasants had cabbages, apples, cheese and some rare bolts of home-made cloth to sell; and the soldiers had loot – chiefly worn silver watches such as the peasants carry, with here and there a ring. The wide cobbled place was thick with moving masses of dun-colored soldiers, often in rags, sometimes without boots. Bits of leather capable of being made into a shoe-sole brought fifty roubles; aluminum shaving dishes were highly prized, and accordions. I saw a broken suspender bid in for ten roubles.

The ‘Death March’

A squadron of Cossacks, rifles on backs, rode up the street with their peaked caps over one ear, and their ‘love-locks’ very prominent. The leader was playing an accordion; every few minutes all the voices crashed together in a chorus. Then a Lettish regiment came marching along down, swinging their arms and singing the slow Lettish Death March, so solemn and courageous. As they went along comrades ran out from the sidewalk to kiss them farewell. They were bound for the line of fire.

In the town-hall sat the Refugee Committee, almost swamped by the thousands of people who had fled before the advance of the Germans or the retreat of the Russians – homeless, helpless. The committee had originally been created by the Imperial government, but since the revolution all members are elected by the refugees themselves. The secretary took us down into the foul flooded cellar where every day were fed seven hundred women, children and old men.

Loot

‘Why did the Russian soldiers loot?’ he repeated, thoughtfully. He himself was a Lett. ‘Well, there were the criminal elements that every army has, and then there were hungry men. Considering the general disorganization it is remarkable they looted so little. Then you must understand that the Russian soldiers have always been taught that on a retreat it is a patriotic duty to drive out the civilian

population and destroy everything to prevent it falling into the enemy's hands. But the most important reason is that the Russians were suspicious of the Lettish population, which they thought were Germanophile, and the reactionary officers encouraged this resentment. Hideous things have been done by counter-revolutionary provocateurs.'

War as Class Issue

The Russian soldiers really consider the Baltic provinces alien territory and do not see why they should defend it. And they have looted, robbed. But in spite of all, it is only the German overlords who want the Germans to come in, and the bourgeoisie which depends upon them; the rest of the population has had a belly-full of German civilization, and the workers, soldiers and landless laborers have long been Social-Democrats, thoroughly in sympathy with the Revolution. That is why the war against Germany was so universally popular in Livonia – it was a class issue.

A Working Class Army

This was corroborated at the office of the Iskostrel – the Executive Committee of the Lettish Sharp-shooters, of which nine regiments, some 15,000 men, belonged to the Twelfth Army. The Letts are almost all Bolsheviks and relied almost altogether upon their own organization, a really revolutionary crowd of fine young fighters. Originally a volunteer corps of the bourgeoisie, the sharp-shooters had finally been reorganized to include all the Letts drafted into the Russian Army, until it was overwhelmingly a working-class body.

Visitors

Word had gone about that Americans were in town – the first within the memory of local mankind – and we had visitors. First was a school-teacher, who spoke French, a little man with a carefully-trimmed beard and gold-rimmed glasses, who declared he was a member of the Intelligentsia and approved of revolutions, but not of the class struggle. He averred that he had been deputed by the peasants of his village to come and ask us how to end the war . . . Then there was a fat German-American baker by the

name of Witt, who had an American passport and had lived in Cincinnati. He professed himself to be a great admirer of President Wilson, had a very hazy idea of the Russian revolution, and came for advice as to where to emigrate; was the bakery business very profitable in Siberia? Finally a sleek, oily prosperous-looking peasant, who represented the Lettish Independence Movement, and deluged us with bad history and shady statistics to prove the yearning desire of every Lett that Livonia should be an independent country – a desire which we already knew was almost non-existent.

The Iskostrel Investigates

Bright and early next morning thundered at our door *Dodparouchik* [i.e. *Podparouchik*, Sub-Lieutenant] Peterson, secretary of the Iskostrel. The soldiers' committee of the Second Lettish Brigade had sent in a complaint about the inefficiency of sixteen officers; a delegate of the Iskosol and the Iskostrel was going down to the lines to see about it; did we want to come along?

This time it was an ambulance which carried us, together with Dr Nahumsen, the delegate army surgeon, holder of several German university degrees, veteran revolutionist and prominent member of the Bolshevik faction. We had aboard also about half a ton of Bolshevik papers – *Soldat* and *Rabochii Put* – to distribute along the front. No passes were necessary, for nobody dared stop such a powerful personage.

'The condition of the army?' the doctor shrugged his shoulders and smiled unpleasantly. 'What do you want? Our French, English and American *comrades* do not send us the supplies they promised. Is it possible that they are trying to starve the Revolution?'

The Death Penalty

We asked about the death penalty in the army, over which such a bitter controversy was raging between the radicals and reactionaries.

'Consider,' he replied, 'what the death penalty in this army signified. Today I will show you regiments, entirely Bolshevik, who have been reduced from four thousand men to *seven* – in this last month's fighting. In all the Twelfth Army there have only been sixty men officially proclaimed deserters since the fall of Riga. No, my friend, Mr Kerensky's death penalty has not been applied to

cowards, deserters and mutineers. The death penalty in the Russian Army is for Bolsheviks, for "agitators", who can be shot down without trial by the revolver of an officer. Luckily they have not tried it here – they do not dare . . .'⁸

Whenever we passed a group of soldiers, Peterson threw out a bundle of papers; he held a pile on his lap, and doled them out one by one to passersby. Thousands of papers with the reactionary program of the new coalition government – suppression of the Soviets, iron discipline in the army, war to the uttermost . . .

Reactionary Officers

Brigade staff headquarters were in a brick farm-house, on a little hill amid wooded meadows. In the living room the officers sat at a long table, a *polkovnik*, his lieutenant-colonel and a group of smart youths wearing the cords of staff duty, eating *shchi*, mountains of meat, and drinking interminable tea in a cloud of cigarette smoke. They welcomed us with great cordiality and a torrent of Moscow French – which is very like that of Stratford; and in fifteen minutes Dr Nahumsen and the Colonel were bitterly disputing politics.

The Colonel was a frank reactionary – out to crush Germany, still loyal to Nicholas the Second, convinced that the country was ruined by the Revolution, and utterly opposed to the soldiers' committees.

'The trouble with the army,' he said, 'is that it is concerned about politics. Soldiers have no business to think.'

All the rest followed their superior's lead. The *podpolkovnik*, a round, merry person with twinkling eyes, informed me confidentially that 'no officer of any character or dignity would have any dealings with the soldiers' committees'.

'Are there no officers who work with the committees?' I asked.

He shrugged disdainfully. 'A few. But we call them the "demagogue" officers, and naturally don't associate with them.'

Pity the Officer!

The others volunteered further interesting information. In the first place, according to them, there were no Bolsheviks in the army – except the committees. The Lettish troops are ignorant and illiterate. The committees interfere seriously with military operations.

And the masses of soldiers are bitterly jealous of the workmen in the towns, who get phenomenal wages and only work eight hours, while 'we are on duty here twenty-four hours a day'.

By this time we had sat at the table two long hours, drinking tea and smoking, during which time the entire staff did absolutely nothing but talk. One tall boy, with a smell of brillantine floating around his shining hair, went over to the piano and began idly fingering waltzes. Occasionally two bent and aged peasants, man and woman, she with bare feet, crept through the room to the tiny closet they had been allowed to keep for themselves . . . An hour later, when we left to go to the soldiers' committee, the staff of the Second Lettish Brigade was still 'working twenty-four hours a day', and expressing its honest resentment against the factory workers of Moscow and Petrograd . . .

Fraternization

The way to the Committee led down across a little brook, up a winding path through a wood all blazoned yellow and red, and out upon lush meadows where the view plunged westward forever across the rich, rolling country. A gaunt, silent youth on horseback led the way, and as we got further and further away from the staff he began to smile, and offered his horse to ride. And he talked, telling of the May days when the Russian troops fraternized with the Germans all along this front.

'The Germans sent spies,' he said; 'but then, so did our officers. There is always somebody around to betray the people, no matter what nation you belong to. Many times they tried to make us attack our German comrades, but we refused. And they also refused; I know of one regiment, where I had many friends, which was condemned for mutiny, reorganized, and twelve men were shot. And still they would not fight the Russians. So they were sent to the Western front. As it was, they finally had to tell us lies to make us advance.'

A Soviet Committee

It was about half a mile to where the low, wide, thatch-covered farm house and its great barn stood baldly on a little rise of ground. Artillery limbers stood parked there, horses were being led to water, there were little cook-fires, and many soldiers. A huge brick

stove divided the interior of the house. On one side lived the peasant and his wife and children, all their belongings heaped in the corners; the other half was bare except for two home-made benches and a rough table, heaped high with papers, reports, pamphlets – among which I noticed Lenin's *Imperialism as a New Stage in Capitalism*. Around this sat six men, one of them a non-commissioned officer, the rest privates – the presidium of the Soviet of the Second Lettish Brigade. Without any place to sleep except the hay-loft, without winter clothes or enough to eat, the committee sat permanently, and had been sitting for a month, doing the work the staff should have done.

This is no unsupported assertion on my part. One had only to ask any soldier where he got his food, his clothing – what he did get – who found and assigned his quarters, represented him politically, defended his interests; he would always say, 'The Committee.' If the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armies gave an order for the Second Lettish Brigade to attack, or to retreat, not a single man would move without the endorsement of the Committee. This resulted from two fears; one that they would be sent to Petrograd to suppress the Revolution, the other that they would be tricked into an offensive as they were tricked in June.

They welcomed us with great friendliness, wiping off the bench where we were to sit, fetching cigarettes, taking our coats; other soldiers crowded in and stood about the door, silently watching.

'Good Training'

A youth with a bright, happy face and tousled hair was the chairman. He told us how the Lettish regiments had been in the front ranks for six months without rest, and they had sent word to the Ministry of War in Petrograd that if they were not relieved by 1 October, they would simply leave the trenches. One regiment had been reduced from four thousand men to seven, and all were without adequate food or clothing.

'How can the men stand it?' I asked.

'The officers say it is good training,' he answered, and everybody laughed. A soldier near the door cried, 'You don't see many officers going barefoot!' And again they laughed.

The Committee seemed highly amused at the officers' accusations.

'They say we are jealous of the workmen in the cities. But we are

ourselves workmen, and we will share the short hours and high wages they have won for us, when we return to the cities after the war. Most of us are union men . . . There are no Bolsheviks in the army? Well, this committee was only elected last month, and every member of every committee in this brigade is Bolshevik . . . We are not illiterate; on the contrary, less than two per cent cannot read and write. The Letts all go to school. As for interfering with military matters, we have nothing to do with them whatever, except in the case of mass movement of troops, which are always arranged beforehand.'

Revolutionary Tribunals

There had been no killing of reactionary officers in this Brigade, even in the Kornilov days – although Colonel Kruskin went around at that time openly praying for the success of the counter-revolution. Several brutal officers had, however, been forced to retire, and one was brought before a revolutionary tribunal for beating a soldier; but he died in battle before the judgment.

Courts martial in the Twelfth Army had been replaced by revolutionary military courts. Each company had a petty court of five elected members – soldiers or officers; above that was the full regimental court, composed of 28 soldiers and 14 officers, elected by the full regiment; and a presidium of six chosen by this assembly sat permanently for the trial of minor offenses – such as stealing. If the soldiers were dissatisfied with their officers, they appealed first to the Commissar of the Army, and if he did nothing, to the Central Executive Army Committee.

'We know,' said the chairman, 'which officers are for us and which are against us. We know that Riga was betrayed. On the first of August we had aeroplanes, heavy artillery; but when the Germans attacked, all those things had been sent away.' He shrugged. 'But what can we do? We must defend the Revolution, and Petrograd. We must watch them, and make them fight . . .'

They showed us copies of all orders of the staff, kept carefully on file here; the chart of location of all troops of the brigade, which had been quartered by the committee; requisitions and purchases of food, clothing, shells, guns; and the record of the political transactions of the soldier party-groups with the Soviets and with the Government.

'We're the Ministry of War!' said one member, jocularly.
'The Ministry of War? We're the whole government! . . .'

* * *

'Nobody Left in Siberia'

In the loft of the barn outside were quartered several batteries of light artillery, part of a Siberian regiment which had just arrived from Irkutsk. With their enormous grey wool *shapkis*, boots made from wild beast hides with the fur outside, new blouses and ruddy faces, they looked like another race. They complained bitterly about their food.

My companion picked out a boy who looked about thirteen.

'Aren't you too young to be a soldier? Why, you're only just big enough to have a girl.'

'If I'm old enough to be in love, I'm old enough to fight,' answered the boy. 'When the war broke out, I was only fifteen, but now I'm a man.'

'Aren't you afraid somebody will steal your girl while you are away?'

The boy shrugged. 'There's nobody left in Siberia to steal her,' he said simply.

Russia's losses in the war are already more than seven millions at the front – twice that in the rear. Four years. Children have grown up to manhood, put on uniform, gone to the trenches . . . 'There is nobody left in Siberia . . .'

* * *

A Market for Loot

Sunday in Venden. A gusty heaven overhead, thin clouds opening in a washed blue sky, with a watery sun riding there. Underfoot, black mud, trampled by thousands of boots, townspeople and peasants, who had driven in for miles around thronging the Lutheran church, with mingled Russian soldiers, very curious but respectful. In the open market place the bartering of odds and ends of loot was going full blast. Immensely high above the town an aeroplane drifted southwest, and all about it the firmament was

spotted with white and black smoke-bursts. The sound of explosions and the hum of the motor came faintly. People looked up carelessly and said, '*Nemtsy!*' (Germans.)

Along about midday tables appeared in two corners of the square. Then the banners – the revolutionary banners, in every shade of red, with gold, silver and white letters on them, moving bright and splendid through the great crowd. Speakers mounted the tables. It was a double mass-meeting, Russian in one corner, Lettish in another, forbidden by the Commandant and frowned upon by the Iskosol. All the town had turned out for it, and most of the fifteen thousand troops. And there was no doubt of the sentiments of that audience – from the great flags behind the tables, one inscribed, 'Power to the People! Long live Peace!' and the other, 'Bread, Peace and Freedom!' to the thunderous roars that met the hot words of the speakers, denouncing the government for not forcing the peace conference, daring it to suppress the Soviets, and dwelling much upon the Imperialistic designs of the Allies in the war.

A Peace Meeting

Surely never since history began has a fighting army held such a peace meeting in the midst of battle. The Russian soldiers have won freedom from the Tsar, they do not believe that there is any reason for continuing a war which they consider to have been imperialistic from the first, they are strongly impregnated with international Socialism – and yet they fight on . . .

Under the wintry sun the banners moved in a little wind alive and glittering, and in thousands the dun-colored soldier-masses stood listening, motionless, to any man who wanted to speak. The chairman of the Iskostrel managed the meeting with a tiny white flag. Overhead always the aeroplanes passed and passed, sometimes circling nearby. From far rumbled the thunder of heavy artillery – it was good weather for battle. A flock of rooks wheeled in hoarse agitation around the church spire. And past the end of the square went unceasingly long trains of trucks and wagons.

There was too much noise. The speakers could not be heard. And every time a German aeroplane came near, there was an uneasy craning of necks – for the village had been bombed three times, and many people killed. The chairman of the two meetings signalled with their little flags, the speakers leaped down, tables

rose upon shoulders, the great red banners dipped and moved . . . First went the Letts, headed by a band of women singing the mournful, stark revolutionary songs of the country; then the banners with Lettish inscriptions; then the Russian banners, and after them all the thousands and thousands, pouring like a muddy river in flood along the narrow street. In at a great gate we went, and past the baronial manor of the Sievers family, liege-lords of Venden. Here on a spur of rock rose the tremendous ruins of the medieval castle of the Teutonic Knights, and below the ground fell steeply down, through ancient trees all yellow and crimson with autumn leaves, to a pond with lilies. From the window of the high keep one could see miles across the fertile, smiling country, woods, lakes, chateaux, fields all chocolate brown or vivid green, foliage all shades from gold to blood-red, gorgeous.

Rushing down torrent-like through the trees the Lettish banners moved with wailing song to the hill under the castle, while the Russians paused midway down a steep slope and set their table under a great oak tree. Around the two tribunes the people packed themselves, hung in the trees, heaped on the roofs of some old sheds . . . Speaker followed speaker, all through the long afternoon. Five hours the immense crowd stood there, intent, listening with all its ears, with all its soul. Like a glacier, patient, slow-moving, a mass of dun caps and brown faces carpeting the steep hillside. Spontaneous roars of applause. Scattered angry cries burst from it. Almost all the speakers were Bolsheviks, and their unbroken refrain was, 'All the power to the Soviets, land for the peasants, an immediate democratic peace.'

Toward the last someone undertook to deliver an old-fashioned 'patriotic' oration – but the fierce blasts of disapproval quickly drove him from the platform. Then a little professor with gold-rimmed spectacles tried to deliver on the Lettish national movement; but no one paid the least attention to him . . .

A Relic of the Dead Past

On a knoll over the water was a black marble tomb, lettered as follows:

Dedicated to the memory of the creator of this park, Count Carl Sievers, by his tenderly-loving and high-regarding son, Oberhofmeister Senator Count Emanuel Sievers, this memorial is

erected on this little hill, which was named Carlsberg after his own name Carl. On this spot he, at that time the last surviving lord of Castle-Wenden, together with the Duckernschen Peasants' Council and their wives, ate lunch, while the peasants' children danced on the nearby flat place.

Thereby had he, with his own artistic sense, with his own creative talents, an idea to dig a large pit in the midst of a stream from the rich springs of Duckernschen, and to place here a great pool, by himself beautifully imagined, in which the noble ruins of the old Ordens-Schloss could reflect themselves.

A couple of soldiers came lounging up. One slowly spelled out the first words.

'*Graf! Count!*' he exclaimed, and spat. 'Well, he's dead, like so many comrades. He was probably a good guy' . . .

Around the monument, the 'great pool', across the rustic bridges and in and out of the artificial grottoes of the aristocratic old park roamed hundreds of gaunt men in filthy uniforms. The ancient turf was torn to mud. Rags, papers, cigarette stubs littered the ground. Up the hillsides were banked the masses of the proletariat, under red banners of the social revolution. Surely in all its stirring history the Orderns-Schloss never looked down on any scene as strange as this!

Beyond the park music was going down the road toward the little Lutheran cemetery. They were burying three Lettish sharpshooters, killed in action yesterday. First came two carts, each with a soldier who strewed the road with evergreen boughs. At the gate of the cemetery one of the soldiers brushed off his hands, heaved a sigh, took out a cigarette and lighted it, and began to weep. The whole town was now streaming down along the road, peasant women in their Sunday kerchiefs, old men in rusty black, soldiers. In their midst moved the military band, slowly playing that extraordinary Lettish death-march, which has such a triumphant happy note. Then the white coffins, with aluminum plaques saying: 'Eternal Peace'.

Peace, peace – how many times you hear that word at the front. The Revolution means peace, popular government means peace, and last of all, bitterly, death means peace. No funeral has the poignant solemnity of a funeral at the front. Almost all these men and women have lost some men in the war; they know what it means, death. And these hundreds of soldiers, with stiff, drawn

faces; they knew these three dead – perhaps some of them even spoke with them, heard them laugh, joke, before the unseen warning shell fell out of the sky and tore them to bloody pieces. They realize well that perhaps next time it will be their turn.

To the quiet deepness of the pastor's voice and muffled sobbing everywhere, the coffins are lowered down, and thud, thud, drops the heavy wet earth, with a sound like cannon far away. The chairman of the Iskostrel is making a revolutionary speech over the graves. The band plays, and a quavering hymn goes up. Nine times the rifles of the firing squad crash on the still air . . .

Overhead is the venomous buzz of an aeroplane. From the woods comes a faint roar of applause. Here death – there life. And as we slowly disperse comes a committee to get the band, excited and eager . . . In the park they are still speaking, and the temporary chairman asks, 'Is there anyone here who wants to say anything against the Bosheviks?' Silence. There appears to be no one. 'The band will be here in a minute' – a great shout – 'and then we'll make a demonstration through the town!'

One People – for a Moment

And now the band is coming down through the trees, still playing the death march. On the flat place near the pool it forms, strikes up suddenly the *Marseillaise*. All the dun-colored thousands are singing now, a thunderous great chorus that shakes the trees. The banners are coming together in front. The chairman waves his white flag. We start – at first slowly, feet rustling over the fallen leaves, then gathering volume, pouring swifter and swifter up through the trees, a wild flood roaring up, unstoppable . . . The band tries to play – there are snatches and rags of music, confused singing. Everybody is exalted: faces are alight – arm and arm we go . . . It is like what the first days of the Revolution must have been. It is the Revolution born again, as it is without ceasing born again, braver, wiser after much suffering . . . Through all the streets and alleys of the town we rush impetuous, and the town is one people again for the moment, as Russia will again be one people – for a moment . . .

But only for the moment. It is Monday, and the Little Soviet is in closed session. When the doors are closed, lights are thrown into the faces of the crowds and outsiders expelled, protesting. One by one the delegates add to the gloomy picture of disaster. The scouts

are in open revolt because their bread allowance has been cut; in another regiment the officers insist on carrying the full amount of their baggage, and had to leave the field telephones behind; in another part of the front the men refuse to build winter quarters, saying it is easier to seize the peasants' houses; the Soviet of the Fifth Division has passed a resolution favoring peace at any cost; here the soldiers have become apathetic, and even indifferent to politics; there they say, 'Why should we defend the country? The country has forgotten us!'

* * *

As we sat on the platform waiting for the Petrograd train it occurred to Williams that we might as well give away our superfluous cigarettes. Accordingly he sat down on a trunk and held out a big box making generous sounds. There must have been several hundred soldiers around. A few came hesitantly and helped themselves, but the rest held aloof, and soon Williams sat alone in the midst of an ever-widening circle. The soldiers were gathered in groups talking in low tones.

Suddenly he saw coming toward him a committee of three privates, carrying rifles with fixed bayonets, and looking dangerous. 'Who are you?' the leader asked. 'Why are you giving away cigarettes? Are you a German spy, trying to bribe the Russian revolutionary army?'

All over the platform the crowd followed, slowly packing itself around Williams and the committee muttering angrily – ready to tear him to pieces.

* * *

We were packed into the train too tight to move. In compartments meant for six people twelve were jammed and there was such a crowd in the aisles that no one could pass. On the roof of the car a hundred soldiers stamped their feet and sang shrill songs in the freezing night air. Inside all the windows were shut, everybody smoked, there was universal conversation.

Meanwhile Life Goes on as Usual

At Valk some gay Red Cross nurses and young officers climbed in at the windows, with candy, bottles of vodka, cheese, sausages,

and all the materials for a feast. By some miracle they wedged themselves among us and began to make merry. They grew amorous, kissing and fondling each other. In our compartment two couples fell to embracing, half lying upon the seats. Somebody pulled the black shade over the lights; another shut the door. It was a debauch, with the rest of us looking on . . .

In the upper berth lay a young captain, coughing incessantly and terribly. Every little while he lifted his wasted face and spat blood into a handkerchief. And over and over he cried: 'The Russians are animals!'

Above the roaring of the train, coughing, bacchic cries, quarrels, all through the night one could hear the feet of ragged soldiers pounding on the roof, rhythmically, and their nasal singing . . .

The Liberator, April–May 1918
(written October 1917)

NOTES

1. The All-Russian Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church convened in Moscow on 28 August 1917. The Sobor voted to restore the Russian Patriarchate and on 13 November elected Tikhon, the Moscow Metropolitan, as Patriarch.
2. In the Councils of 1666–7 of the Russian Orthodox Church the Patriarch Nikon introduced a number of reforms in Church ritual and translation of the Bible in order to harmonize Russian practice with that of Constantinople. Nikon's reforms, and his removal from parishes of the right to elect their priests, created a profound schism within the Russian Orthodox Church. Adherents of the traditions which had been confirmed by the Council of 1551 became known as the Old Believers. During the eighteenth century Old Believer non-conformity gave rise to a variety of sects, including the Dukhobors ('Soul-Strugglers') and the Molokans ('Milk-Drinkers'). Reed's 'Dyrnicki' are probably the 'Dyromoly', a Siberian sect whose worship of the empty window may reflect popular notions of the Buddhist Nirvana.
3. Martov did not formally break with Tsereteli and the leadership of the Menshevik party, but remained the leader of a small group, the Menshevik Internationalists, who were opposed to the war. In early October the Menshevik Internationalists in the Council of the Republic broke away to form a separate group, but this was not the formal break mistakenly announced in the press.
4. Kornilov rebellion: see Biographical Notes.
5. Democratic Conference: see document 5, note 2.
6. Livonia (Livland) was one of the three Baltic provinces of the Tsarist

- Empire; the others were Kurland (present-day Latvia south of the Western Dvina) and Estland. The population of Livonia, which had been ruled by the Teutonic Knights from the thirteenth century, by Poland from 1561, by Sweden from 1629 and by Russia since 1721, was mainly comprised of Latvians and Estonians. In 1918 Livonia was divided between the newly independent republics of Latvia and Estonia.
7. During the Moscow State Conference, 25–8 August 1917, Kornilov had declared, 'Let us not permit the introduction of order in the rear to depend on the loss of Riga.' Thereafter, to the Right Kornilov 'became a prophet who forecast the inevitable fall of Riga, while to the Left, including Kerensky, the Bolsheviks and the army committees, he had revealed his covert intention deliberately to surrender Riga to frighten the country into dictatorship'. The evacuation of Riga was ordered not by Kornilov but by General Parsky. On the other hand, 'Kornilov offered no directives that can be determined . . . [and] failed to provide reinforcements and could easily have despatched the Third Cavalry Corps had they not been earmarked for Petrograd'. See Allan K. Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army*, vol II (Princeton, NJ, 1987) p. 189.
 8. A bill abolishing the death penalty had been adopted by the First Duma in 1905 but this legislation lapsed following its dissolution in July 1906. The death penalty had been abolished by the Provisional Government in civil, military and naval law on 25 March, but on 25 July Kerensky's cabinet bowed to General Kornilov's demand and reintroduced it for military personnel in the theatre of military operations and for enemy spies. Kerensky thereafter agreed with Kornilov that martial law would be declared in Petrograd, and on 9 September, after his break with Kornilov, he declared martial law, in effect extending the death penalty to that city.

8

Letter to Boardman Robinson

Petrograd, October 29 [1917]

Dear Mike –

So you and the rest may know the real political situation at this crucial moment.

What was the Russian revolution about? First, it was a political revolution for the overthrow of the autocracy and the setting up of a bourgeois republic here. The political revolution succeeding and immediately passing on to the class war, the bourgeois reformers, constitutionalists, progressives, intelligentsia, etc. first lost interest and then went over to the right – more or less. Thus Aladin, Rodzyanko, Plekhanov, Milyukov, Potresov, Kropotkin, Chaikovsky, Breshko-Breshkovskaya, Burtsev, Cheplov,¹ Andreev, etc.

Gorky stuck to the left, and there are Lenin, Trotsky, Kamenev, Maria Spiridonova, Martov, Ryazanov, Kamkov, Madame Kollontai, Zinoviev.

In the center appeared first Kerensky, then men like Savinkov, both forced rightward by the terrible pressure of both sides; then Chkheidze, Tsereteli (both big men), Bogdanov,² Dan, Liber, Gots, finally brought to their knees by the terrible extremity of the country, to accept coalition with the Cadets and the *gros industriels*, to accept with more or less thoroughness the war program of the Allies.

What do the masses of the Russian people want? First, peace then land; then a democratic republic – not like France or America; and for the present time, before the Constituent Assembly, all the power to go to the Soviets of Workmen, Soldiers, and Peasants, that spontaneous proletarian government born of the revolution.

What are they getting? At this moment the Council of the Russian Republic is meeting in the Marinsky Palace, the preparliament, half-bourgeois, half-Socialist, from which the Bolsheviks withdrew in a huff the other day.³ Instead of attempting to force the Allies to declare democratic peace-terms, all the talk of

the powerful there is about restoring discipline in the army by wholesale killing. Instead of making some provision by which the peasants can cultivate, at least temporarily, the vast uncultivated estates, while the whole country is starving, the Council recommends suppressing the 'provincial anarchy' which accompanies the forcible taking of land by the peasants themselves by force of arms. Instead of working with the soldiers' committees, who alone have kept the army together, fed it and held it in the trenches, the Council wants to abolish the committees – or at least, when it talks about 'democratizing the army', it confines the business to talk. Instead of working with the workmen's factory committees, who are doing such wonderful things, the Council talks of suppressing them and going back to the old industrial régime. And instead of consolidating the democratic Russian republic, the right wing of the Council not only impudently says that the government of Russia had no legal right to declare itself a republic before the Constituent,⁴ but it even goes so far as to publish a program (the government's program), calling for the abolition of the Soviets. And Burtsev's paper every day now openly calls for a military dictatorship of Kerensky, Kornilov and Kaledin!

I can conservatively say that at the present moment in the ruling powers of Russia there is not a single man who understands and expresses the will of the Russian people – or anyway, not one who expresses it. The officers sabotage the army; the manufacturers lock out their workmen and sabotage industry; the Cadets are openly in favor of starving the revolution – as are also the Allies.

By prodigious efforts, the government and the moderate Socialists have succeeded in side-tracking the All-Russian Convention of Soviets of Workmen, Peasants and Soldiers, which was to have been called for October twentieth – or at least they think they have side-tracked it. We wait. If it meets, things will happen, for almost all the Soviets have gone Bolshevik in the last two months – since the Kornilov affair. And by the way, the government, which has been proven to be implicated in the Kornilov business, is now white-washing Kornilov, so that in the midst of revolutionary Petrograd, with all the legions of workmen, soldiers, sailors, it will soon be dangerous to ever say of Kornilov that he attempted a counter-revolution. And the bourgeois papers, who insult every day the revolutionary democracy, are themselves provoking or attempting to provoke the Bolsheviks to armed violence, after the methods of such people the world over. What a farce!

But the workmen are being turned out of the factories, the army

is starving and without winter clothes, the bourgeoisie and the officers are getting more and more arrogant, and openly speak of a forthcoming military coup-d'état – another Kornilov business, although better prepared. It is possible that the proletariat will finally lose its temper and rise; it is possible that the generals will come with fire and sword; at any rate, blood will flow – in rivers.

But Russian matters, as you know, do not move by schedule; so I may be wrong altogether. Only, if human nature is human nature here, the Russian revolution is certainly getting to a frightful stage. The French would have torn things to pieces long ago. The Russians talk violently, but they do nothing particular about it all except hoist tea and say, 'The situation is very grave!'

I have so far learned one lesson, I think; and that is, that as long as this world exists, the 'working class and the employing class have nothing in common'.⁵ And by the way, that reminds me; three days ago at Kharkov 30,000 workmen joined the I.W.W. (coal miners), adopted the preamble and everything.

Kerensky is dying very fast – he not only dopes, poor devil, but he has hysterics when he speaks. One kidney is taken out, the other is tubercular, one lung is gone with galloping consumption, and he has an incurable stomach trouble. Tsereteli, Chkheidze and Martov are far gone in consumption.⁶ Life is hideously swift for compromisers here. Kerensky is quite alone, detested by the Socialist parties, particularly the left wing, hated by the bourgeoisie, only kept there in the Winter Palace as a symbol of a sacred union of all Russians which does not exist. Tsereteli, Dan, Liber, Gots, are down-rushing Gironde – though not so priggish as the French one – who have counselled moderation and moderation when events were being born, violent and swift and extreme; the extremes of hunger, cold, death in the trenches, love of liberty. The recent Duma elections in Moscow show where these gentlemen and their Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary parties get off. Last June the elections have [earned] them an enormous majority; now out of more than seven hundred elections to the town and district Dumas, about 350 are Bolshevik, about 200 Cadet, and the rest are split up among the S.R., Menshevik and three other little parties in equal proportions.

It looks like a show-down soon – and the whole country will welcome it – any kind of a show-down. Yours.

NOTES

1. Presumably misprint for Chernov.
2. B. Oleinich Bogdanov, Menshevik 'defencist'. Member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet. In August 1917 he was a leading figure in the Petrograd Soviet's Committee of Struggle against Counter-Revolution, which mobilized opposition to Kornilov.
3. The Bolsheviks walked out of the Council of the Republic (Pre-Parliament) on 20 October 1917. See document 5, note 3.
4. See document 1, note 1.
5. Reed here quotes from the Preamble to the IWW Constitution.
6. Reed exaggerates the seriousness of Kerensky's health problems. Kerensky had a kidney removed at a Finnish hospital in March 1916 – the same operation which Reed underwent in November.

9

Red Russia: Kerensky, I

November 5, 1917¹

'I am a doomed man,' said Alexander Kerensky from the tribune of the Council of the Russian Republic on October 26th, 'and it doesn't matter what happens to me . . .'

Doomed indeed. Tuberculosis of the kidneys, of the lungs, and they say tumor of the stomach. Extremely emotional, strung to an almost hysterical pitch, the awful task of riding the Russian whirlwind is wearing him down visibly.²

'Comrades!' he said at the Democratic Assembly, 'If I speak to you like this, it is because the cross I carry, and which forces me to be far from you, is so terribly heavy!'

At the time of this writing, November 5, Kerensky is alone, as perhaps never leader has been alone in all history. In the midst of the class-struggle, which deepens and grows bitterer day by day, his place becomes more and more precarious. Things are moving swiftly to a crisis, to the *lutte finale* between bourgeoisie and proletariat – which Kerensky tried with all his strength to avoid – and the 'Moderates' disappear from the stormy scene. Kerensky alone remains, stubborn and solitary, holding his way . . .

The revolutionary democracy says that he has 'sold out' to the bourgeoisie and the foreign imperialists. The bourgeoisie and the reactionary foreign influences – with the British Embassy at their head – accuse him of having 'sold out' to the Germans. Upon him is concentrated the hatred of both sides, as upon a symbol of Russia torn in half. Kerensky will fall, and his fall will be the signal for civil war.

The familiar vilifications are heaped upon him; he is everything from 'traitor' to 'corruptor of children'. A common tale, reprinted weekly in the newspapers, is that of his separation from his wife, and approaching marriage with a well-known variety actress – or even that the actress is living in the Winter Palace.³ One of the former Ministers, whose apartment was next to Kerensky's, says that he was kept awake all night by the Premier singing operatic

arias – and adds that Kerensky sleeps in the gold and blue bed of the Tsar Alexander III, which is a *very wide* bed . . . People repeat that Kerensky is surrounding himself with imperial pomp, and I have been told how, while speaking at the Moscow Conference, he kept two officers standing at salute until they fainted – a myth which has been exploded by every eye-witness. But the most widely spread accusation is that ‘he is just trying to make a name for himself in history’. And if that is Kerensky’s fell design, he has succeeded.

In all the multitudes of revolutionary leaders there is not one with Kerensky’s personal magnetism, his dramatic faculty of firing men. I first saw him at the Democratic Assembly, where he marched into the middle of the great Alexandrinsky Theater, in the midst of an immense hostile crowd firmly convinced that he was implicated in the Kornilov affair, and swept them off their feet by his passionate speech. At the opening of the Council of the Russian Republic I again heard him, and twice more, raising himself and his audience to heights of emotion, collapsing utterly afterward, and the last time weeping violently in his seat.⁴ A tall, broad-shouldered figure as he stood there, in his utterly plain brown uniform, rather flabby around the middle, with flashing eyes, bristling hair, abrupt gestures, and swift, resonant speech. What did he say? Nothing very concrete, except once when he bitterly denounced the Bolsheviks for provoking bloodshed. Otherwise vague defenses of himself, generalities about the necessity for disorder in the country to cease, about defending the revolution, about free Russia . . . A man of moods, nervous, domineering, independent, of fearful capacity for work under frightful physical handicaps, absolutely honest but with no real fixity of purpose – as the leader of the Russian Revolution should have. And sick.

We had many appointments to see him at his office in the Winter Palace. Always at the last moment he would suddenly be taken ill, or busy – with meetings of the Government, the War Council, deputations from the front, from the Caucasus, Siberia, visits of the Allied Ambassadors, or a delegation like one we saw – reactionary priests objecting to the separation of Church and State . . .

Finally one day we penetrated as far as the private billiard-room of the Emperor, an immense chamber paneled in rose-wood inlaid with brass, where in a corner beside the Gargantuan rose-wood billiard table, below the shrouded portraits of the Tsars, was the plain desk at which he worked. The Military Commissar for the

Russian troops in France and Salonika was striding up and down, biting his nails. It appeared that the Minister-President was closeted with the British Ambassador, hours late for all appointments . . .

Then, just as we were about to give up, the door opened and a smiling little spic-and-span naval adjutant beckoned. We entered a great mahogany room, lined with heavy Gothic book-cases, in the center of which a stairway mounted to a balcony above. This was the Tsar's private library and reception-room. I had time to notice the works of Jack London in English, on a shelf, when Kerensky came toward us. As he shook hands he looked into each face searchingly for a second, and then led the way swiftly across to a big table with chairs all around.

On his high forehead the short hair bristled straight up like a brush, grey-discolored. His whole face was greyish in color, puffed out unhealthily, with deep pouches under the eyes. He looked at one shrewdly, humorously, squinting as if the light hurt. The long fingers of his hands twisted nervously tight around each other once or twice, and then he laid them on the table, and they were quiet. His whole attitude was quizzically friendly, as if receiving reporters was an amusing relaxation. When he picked up a paper with questions on it, I noticed that he put it within an inch of his eyes, as if he were terribly near-sighted.

'What do you consider your job here?' I asked him. He laughed as if it tickled him.

'Just to free Russia,' he answered drily, and smiled as if it were a good joke.

'What do you think will be the solution of the present struggle between the extreme radicals and the extreme reactionaries?'

'That I won't answer,' he shot back swiftly. 'What's the next?'

'What have you to say to the democratic masses of the United States?'

'Well . . .' he rubbed his chin and grinned. 'What am I going to say to that?' His attitude said, do you think I'm God Almighty? 'Let them understand the Russian democracy,' he went on, 'and help it to fight reaction – everywhere in the world. Let them understand the soul of Russia, the real spirit of the Russian people. That's all I have to say to them.'

I then asked, 'What lesson do you draw from the Russian Revolution for the revolutionary democratic elements of the world?'

'Ah-hah.' He turned that over in his mind and gave me a sharp look. 'Do you think the Revolution in Russia is over, then? It would be very short-sighted for me to draw any lesson from the Revolution.' He jerked his head in emphasis, and spoke vehemently. 'Let the masses of the Russian people in action teach their own lesson. Draw the lesson yourself, comrade – you can see it before your eyes!'

He stopped and then began abruptly:

'This is not a political revolution. It is not like the French revolution. It is an economic revolution, and there will be necessary in Russia a profound revaluation of classes. And it is also a complicated process for the many different nationalities of Russia. Remember that the French revolution took five years, and that France was inhabited by one people, and that France is only the size of three of our provincial districts. No, the Russian revolution is not over – it is just beginning!'

I made way for the Associated Press correspondent,⁵ who had the usual Associated Press prejudices against common peasants, soldiers and workingmen who insisted upon calling one *tovarishch* – comrade.

'Mr. Kerensky,' said the Associated Press man, 'in England and France people are disappointed with the Revolution –'

'Yes, I know,' interrupted Kerensky, quizzically. 'Abroad it is fashionable to be disappointed with the Revolution!'

'I mean,' went on the Associated Press man, a little disconcerted, 'people are disappointed in Russia's part in the war.'

I remember it was the day after the news reached Petrograd of the great defeat of the Italians on the Carso;⁶ for Kerensky immediately shot back, with a grin. 'The young man had better go to Italy!'

The Associated Press man tried again. 'What is your explanation of why the Russians have stopped fighting?'

'That is a foolish question to ask.' Kerensky was annoyed. 'Russia started the war first, and for a long time she bore the whole brunt of it. Her losses have been inconceivably greater than any other nation. Russia has now the right to demand of the Allies that they bring to bear a greater force of arms.' He stopped and stared for a moment at his interlocutor. 'You are asking why the Russians have stopped fighting, and the Russians are asking where is the British fleet – with the German battleships in the Gulf of Riga?'

Again he ceased suddenly, and as suddenly burst out again. 'The Russian Revolution hasn't failed and the Revolutionary Army hasn't failed. It is not the Revolution which caused disorganization in the army – that disorganization was accomplished years ago, by the old regime. Why aren't the Russians fighting? I will tell you. Because the masses of the people are economically tired – and because they are disillusioned with the Allies!'

The Associated Press man tried a new tack. 'Do you think it would be advantageous to bring American troops to Russia?'

'Good,' remarked the Premier off-hand, 'but impossible. Transportation . . .'

'What can America do which would help Russia the most?'

Without hesitation Kerensky answered, 'Send us books, shoes, machinery – and *money*.'

Abruptly he stood up, shook hands, and before we were out the room he went quickly across to a desk piled high . . . and he began to write . . .⁷

The Liberator, April 1918

NOTES

Reports of Kerensky's interview with the Associated Press appeared in the *New York Times*, 1 and 3 November 1917. His ominous warnings on the state of Russia surprised the American people, and stunned the administration. The American Ambassador in Petrograd, David R. Francis, and the eminent personages who made up the Root Mission in midsummer, had repeatedly expressed their optimism about the security of the Provisional Government, and the capacity of Russia to continue in the war. Kerensky's words, reported in the *Washington Post* under the headline 'Russia Quits War', and a rapid clarification by Secretary of State Lansing, suggested that the United States government was ill-informed about the rapidly changing situation in Russia. To counter the unfortunate impression created by this interview, Kerensky was forced to see the press again.

1. There is some uncertainty within Reed's writings about the precise date of his interview with Kerensky. In *Ten Days*, p. 39, he gives 31 October 1917. As published in *The Liberator* in April 1918, Reed's article was dated 23 October 1917. Since it contains a reference to the battle of Caporetto, which began 24 October, the date of the article is Old Style. He heard Kerensky's 'doomed man' speech at the Council of the Republic on 26 October, the interview probably took place on the 31st, and the article was written on 5 November.

2. See document 8, note 4.
3. On account of his relationship with her cousin Elena, Kerensky had been estranged from his wife, Olga Baranovskaya, since 1916. From July 1917 Kerensky lived in the Winter Palace with Elena and not with the actress Timé, as was rumoured.
4. Kerensky addressed the Democratic Conference on 27 September. The Provisional Council of the Republic first met on 20 October.
5. *The Masses* long viewed the Associated Press as an enemy of the working class in America. Art Young's cartoon in the July 1913 issue, in which the AP was portrayed in the act of furtively poisoning the reservoir of news with a vial of lies, resulted in a lawsuit against the editor, Max Eastman, and the cartoonist. The case was dropped after two years.
6. The battle of Caporetto began 24 October 1917.
7. Reed included this account of the AP interview with Kerensky in an appendix to *Ten Days*, pp. 329–30.

10

John Reed Cables the *Call* News of the Bolshevik Revolt

The Petrograd garrison, the Kronstadt sailors and the Red Guard, comprising as a whole the Bolshevik army, last night defeated Kerensky's army of 7,000 Cossacks, junkers (students in military schools) and artillery who were attacking the capital.

The attempted 'junker' insurrection on Sunday, directed by the Committee of Salvation, comprising Mensheviks (moderate Socialists) and Cadets (Constitutional Democrats), was put down by the Kronstadt sailors, who took an armored car and telephone station by assault, and also the 'junker' school.

Hundreds of delegates arrived at Smolny Institute, the headquarters of the revolutionary government and of the Councils, to report the solidarity of the army at the front with the Bolsheviks.

This is the revolution, the class struggle, with the proletariat, the workmen, the soldiers and the peasants lined up against the bourgeoisie. Last March was only the preliminary revolution. At the present moment the proletariat are triumphant.

The rank and file of the Workmen's, Soldiers' and Peasants' Councils¹ are in control, with Lenin and Trotsky leading. Their program is to give the land to the peasants, to socialize natural resources and industry and for an armistice and democratic peace conference. The extraordinary and immense power of the Bolsheviks lies in the fact that the Kerensky government absolutely ignored the desires of the masses as expressed in the Bolshevik program of peace, land and workers' control of industry.

The entire insurrection is a stirring spectacle of proletarian mass organization action, bravery and generosity. This morning I was at the scene of the dispersal of the junkers defending the Winter Palace by the Soviet troops. In the afternoon I was present at the opening of the All-Russian Assembly of Soviets. In the evening I

witnessed the assault on the Winter Palace, entering with the first Bolshevik troops.²

I saw Duma members going unarmed to die with the Provisional Government. I witnessed the arrest of the ministers.

I was at the meeting of the city Duma (council) on the morning of the 26th when the Mensheviks, Cadets and others declared against the Bolsheviks and formed a Committee of Salvation.³ During the night I witnessed a stormy meeting of the city regiments, deciding which side to support, and then attended the Councils' meeting at Smolny Institute, witnessing the declaration of peace and land, the decree abolishing capital punishment, and the taking over of the government by the Councils and appointment of a new cabinet.

Then, on November 9, I watched the bourgeois counter revolutionary movement growing. The city Duma visited the Peter-Paul fortress at midnight to see the prisoners. On the 10th rumors spread throughout the city that Kerensky was coming with troops.

I went to Tsarskoe Selo and saw the Bolshevik troops falling back. War preparations were made at midnight to Smolny Institute. On the 11th factories closed down and the Red Guard was ordered out. The whole city streamed out, men, women, and children, with rifles and shovels. The telephone station and the Hotel Astoria were taken by junkers, but retaken by Bolshevik sailors.

On the 12th victorious battles took place against the Kerensky troops at Pulkovo, Krasnoe Selo, Kolpino, Tsarskoe Selo and Gatchina.

I went to the front with the Red Guard.

The movement to give all power to the Councils has been growing a long time. The attempt by the masses to force the Councils to take the power in July resulted in the so-called Bolshevik insurrection which was put down by the Center Socialist parties, led by Liber, Dan, Tsereteli, Gots and so on who held power.

The impotence of the Provisional Government created discontent and disgust and led to the astounding growth of the Bolsheviks, which growth was also accelerated by the Liber, Dan group forcing a coalition with the Cadets, against the will of the Democratic Assembly held in September.

Meanwhile, with Liber, Dan, etc., heading the Central All-Russian Council,⁴ the separate Councils, one by one, went over to the Bolsheviks and demanded the calling of a new All-Russian

Assembly of the Councils, which was opposed by the old crowd, and also by the army, fleet, peasant and labor unions' committees, elected early in the revolution.

But the masses were of another mind and insisted on the calling together of the Councils, insisted on all power to the Councils, and on the downfall of the Provisional Government on the eve of the All-Russian meeting which was sabotaged by the Liber, Dan group, the Cadets, etc.

The Provisional Government made quiet preparations to suppress any demonstration for all power to the Councils, and tried to send the revolutionary Petrograd garrison to the front and replace it with loyal troops. The garrison refused, and demanded representation on the staff but was refused. The garrison then refused to take orders from anybody except the Petrograd Council, which formed a Military Revolutionary Committee.

The army staff planned to take action, but was overheard on the nights of the 6th and 7th by the members of the Pavlovsk regiment, who at once began to arrest the staff and government. The insurrection was on and could not be stopped.

The military revolutionary committee took charge and put into execution a perfect and comprehensive plan, captured the whole city and patrolled it the first three nights, while the insurrection was coming on. There were no disorders and no crimes. The committee of Bolsheviks kept the town absolutely quiet.

The many stories being sent out regarding Bolshevik looting and murdering are without foundation.⁵ In fact, after being captured and released on the word of honor many 'junkers' again took part in the treacherous fighting. Some were murdered by their outraged opponents, but very few; while the Bolshevik losses were five times as great.

All the newspapers except the Bolshevik ones retailed lies to excite the population, and yet many of them were not suppressed. The City Duma is the center of absolute hostility to the Bolsheviks, with no workingmen a member of it, but composed instead of the Center and Right Socialist parties, Cadets and all sorts of representatives of the bourgeoisie, breathing threats and even mobbing Bolshevik guards they caught alone. Nevertheless they have not been arrested.

Now other Socialist parties are forming a new government and debating whether or not to allow the Bolsheviks to take part in it. No one is with the Bolsheviks except the proletariat, but that is

solidly for them. All the bourgeoisie and appendages are relentlessly hostile.

The employees of all government departments, state bank, telephone, etc., are on strike, paralyzing the business of the government. They refuse to work with the Bolshevik ministers. The new Bolshevik plan is to run the government by a series of collegiums, instead of a ministry, headed by a chairman. The collegiums are called the People's Commissars, who meet in a Council of People's Commissars, with Lenin as chairman.

The news from the front and from all over the country shows that although some fighting is still going on in various cities the masses are pretty solid for the Bolsheviks except in the Don region, where General Kaledin and the Cossacks have proclaimed a military dictatorship.

The Workmen's, Soldiers' and Peasants' Council, through *The Call*, send to the American International Socialists a greeting from the first proletarian republic of the world.

New York Call, 22 November 1917
(written 13 November 1917)

NOTES

1. Throughout Reed uses 'Council' for the Russian term 'Soviet'.
2. The Winter Palace had been weakly defended. It was not taken by storm but captured relatively easily by the Military Revolutionary Committee after a siege of about twenty-four hours. See S. P. Melgunov, *Bolshevik Seizure of Power* (Santa Barbara, Cal., 1972).
3. The Committee of Salvation of the Revolution was formed at a meeting of the Petrograd City Duma on 7 November, while the Second Congress of Soviets was in session. Reed described the scene in *Ten Days*, ch. 4. It included members of the City Duma, the Executive Committee of the first convocation of the Congress of Soviets, the Executive Committee of Peasants' Deputies, and the PSR and Menshevik factions who had left the Second Congress. Other participants included representatives of the Pre-Parliament, of the People's Socialist Party, of Plekhanov's *Edinstvo* group, Tsentrolot, and the unions of railways and postal and telegraph workers. The Chairman of the Committee was Avksentiev. The Mensheviks soon left the Committee, which was afterwards dominated by the PSR. The failure of the Committee has been attributed to its reluctance to use armed force against a government which apparently enjoyed popular support.

4. The Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies remained under the leadership of the PSR and 'moderate' socialists until a new CEC was elected at the second meeting of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets in November.
5. Reed here and subsequently (see document 17) attempted to counter assertions in the Western press that the Bolshevik coup was accompanied by wild excesses of pillage and rapine and in doing so he perhaps tended to downplay reports of disorder. Among the many sources of such stories was David Soskice, Kerensky's private secretary, whose account of events at the Winter Palace on 7-8 November made a notable contribution to anti-Bolshevik propaganda:

The Palace was pillaged and devastated from top to bottom by the Bolshevik armed mob as though by a horde of barbarians. All of the State papers were destroyed. Priceless pictures were ripped from their frames by bayonets. Several hundred carefully packed boxes of rare plate and china, which Kerensky exerted himself to preserve, were broken open and the contents smashed or carried off. The library of Alexander III, the doors of which we had locked and sealed, and which we never entered, was forced open and ransacked, books and manuscripts burnt and destroyed. My study, formerly the Tsaritsa's salon, like all other rooms, was thrown into chaos. . . . Desks, pictures, ornaments – everything was destroyed. I will refrain from describing the hideous scenes which took place in the wine-cellars, and the fate to which some of the captured women soldiers were submitted.

(David Soskice, 'The Last of the Kerensky Government',
Manchester Guardian, 27 December 1917, p. 5)

Soskice left the Palace in the afternoon. Reed entered the Winter Palace with the first Bolshevik troops perhaps five or six hours after Soskice had left, and described the disorder with greater equanimity in *Ten Days*, pp. 102-3.

11

Red Russia: The Triumph of the Bolsheviki

I

The real revolution has begun. All the swift events of the last eight crowded months – the sudden debacle of Tsarism in March, the brief inglorious attempt of Milyukov¹ to establish a safe and sane bourgeois republic, the rise of Kerensky and the precarious structure of hasty compromise which constituted the Provisional Government – these were merely the prologue to the great drama of naked class-struggle which has now opened. For the first time in history the working-class has seized the power of the state, for its own purposes – and means to keep it.

To-day the Bolsheviki are supreme in Russia. The ominous onward march of Kaledin, self-proclaimed military dictator and restorer of middle-class order, has stopped – his own Cossacks are turning against him. Yesterday Kerensky, after his defeat and the surrender of his staff at Gatchina, fled in disguise.² The news has just come that Moscow, after a bloody battle that wrecked the Kremlin and smashed thousands of lives, is undisputedly in the possession of the Military Revolutionary Committee.³ As far as anyone can see, there is no force in Russia to challenge the Bolshevik power. And yet, as I write this, in the flush of their success, the new-born revolution of the proletariat is ringed round with a vast fear and hatred.

Last night two thousand Red Guards – the proletarian militia organized and armed by Trotsky just before the final clash – swung down the Zagorodny in triumph.⁴ Ahead a military band was playing – and never did it sound so appropriate – the *Marseillaise*. Blood-red flags dropped over the dark ranks of the marching workers. They were going to meet and welcome home to 'Red Petrograd' the saviours of the new proletarian revolution – the troops who had just fought so desperately and so successfully against Kerensky and his Cossacks. In the bitter dusk they

tramped, singing, men and women, their tall bayonets swinging, through streets faintly lighted and slippery with mud. And as they marched they passed always between crowds that were hostile, contemptuous, fearful.

The proletarian revolution has no friends except the proletariat. The bourgeoisie – business men, shop-keepers, students, land owners, officers, political office-holders and their fringe of clerks and servants and hangers-on, are solidly in opposition to the new order. The moderate Socialist parties – though they may find themselves forced by circumstances to combine with the Bolsheviks – hate them bitterly. But these elements are so far powerless. The military strength is represented only by part of the Cossacks, and the Junkers – cadets of the Officer's Schools. While on the side of the Bolsheviks are ranged the whole rank and file of the workers and the poorer peasants; and the soldiers and sailors are with and of them. On one side the workers, on the other side, everybody else. For the moment the cleavage has all the clear and beautiful distinctness of familiar theory. . . .

And at this date – I am writing November 11 – the workers are in complete control. No one can know what the next few days may bring forth. If they can persuade the other Socialist parties to join with them in accomplishing their gigantic immediate program of Bread, Peace and Land for the Peasants, this proletarian government will probably last until the Constituent Assembly – and after that, in history, a pillar of fire for mankind for ever.

This is the moment towards which all revolutions tend. The course of every revolution is toward the left, swifter and swifter. And the Government which would retain power in revolutionary times must do the will of the revolutionary masses – or smash it with cannon. The Provisional Government did neither.

Since last March, when the roaring torrents of workmen and soldiers bearing upon the Tauride Palace compelled the frightened Duma to assume the supreme power in Russia, it is the masses of the people – workmen, soldiers and peasants – who have forced every change in the course of the Revolution. It was they who hurled down the Milyukov ministry.⁵ It was their Soviets – their Council of Workingmen's and Soldiers' Delegates – which proclaimed to the world the Russian peace terms – 'no annexations, no indemnities, the right of peoples to dispose of themselves'. And again in July, it was the spontaneous rising up of the unorganized masses, again storming the Tauride Palace, which forced the

Soviets to assume power in the name of the proletariat.⁶

The Bolshevik party was the ultimate political expression of this popular will. It was useless to hunt down the Bolsheviks as rioters and imprison them – as was done after the riots which grew out of the July demonstrations. Useless, too, to fling at them the accusation manufactured by provocateurs and reactionaries, and repeated until it was believed by all the world, that they were the paid agents of Germany. Unable to substantiate the accusations against the arrested Bolsheviks, the Provisional Government was obliged to release them, one by one, without trial, until of the original hundred less than twenty remained in prison.⁷

Meanwhile, day by day, the Bolshevik power was growing. It was bound to grow. For the whole Bolshevik program was simply a formulation of the desires of the masses of Russia. It called for a general, democratic *immediate* peace (that got the army, sick of war); the land to be immediately at the disposal of the Peasant Land Committees (that got the peasants); and control of industry by the workers (that got Labour). The demand that the government should be simply the Soviets of the Workingmen's and Soldier's Delegates, without participation by the propertied classes, until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly at the end of November, when the political form of the new Russia should be definitely decided – this completed their program. And it is worthy of remark that when the Bolsheviks first demanded that all power should be given to the Soviets, the majority of the Soviets were still bitterly anti-Bolshevik. It is a mark both of their utter consistency and of their complete confidence in the approaching triumph of their cause. Their cry 'All power to the Soviets!' was the voice of the Russian masses; and in the face of the increasing impotence and indecision of the ever-changing Provisional Government, it grew louder day by day.

So it was that, while the 'Center' Socialist parties, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionist moderates, involved themselves in compromise with the bourgeoisie, the Bolsheviks were rapidly capturing the Russian masses. In July they had been hunted and despised; by September the metropolitan workingmen, the sailors of the Baltic fleet, and the body of the army, had been won almost entirely to their cause.

It was the fate of the hesitating successive ministries of the Provisional Government to be blind to this inexorable trend of affairs. To the Soviets' call for peace without annexations or indem-

nities, the Government replied by ordering the July offensive into Austrian Galicia. In answer to the whole country's longing for peace, the Government permitted the Allies to postpone and again postpone the promised Conference on the Aims of the War, and finally to announce that war aims would not be discussed at all. In regard to the land question, the Government's course was equally indecisive. In the summer, Peasant Land Committees had been appointed for the purpose of temporary disposal of the great estates; but when they began to act, they were arrested and imprisoned. To the agrarian disorders that resulted from the holding back of the long-promised land, the Government replied by sending Cossacks to put down the 'anarchy'. The army was demoralized by suspicion of its officers, the Government, instead of attempting the democratization of the reactionary staffs, tried to suppress the Soldiers' Committees, and restored the death penalty in behalf of discipline.⁸ Industry was in a terrible state of disorganization, a struggle to the death between manufacturers and workmen; but instead of establishing some sort of state control over the factories, and making use of the immensely valuable democratic workingmen's organizations, Minister of Labor Skobelev tried to abolish the shop Committees.

But the final collapse of the Provisional Government may be laid most of all to three colossal blunders; the Galician offensive of July, the Kornilov affair, and Coalition with the bourgeoisie.

After the Soviets' world-wide call for peace without annexations and indemnities, the Russian and German armies had fraternised for several months, until, according to the testimony of Rosa Luxemburg,* the German troops were thoroughly unwilling to fight. In July, by tricks, exhortations and lies, the Russians were cajoled into advancing – the whole movement crumbling and crashing down in disaster at Kalusz and Tarnopol; and as a result, the morale of the Russian armies and their faith in their officers irreparably ruined.

Then, after the fall of Riga, came the Kornilov attempt to march on Petrograd and establish a military dictatorship. All the details of

* 'So, you have broken the peace! The Russian revolution was everything to us, too. Everything in Germany was tottering, falling . . . For months the soldiers of the two armies fraternized, and our officers were powerless to stop it. Then suddenly the Russians fired upon their German Comrades! After that it was easy to convince the Germans that the Russian peace was false. Alas, my poor friends! Germany will destroy you now, and for us is black despair come again . . .' – Letter of Rosa Luxemburg to a Russian Socialist, July, 1917. [Reed's note.]

the story have not yet come out, but it is plain that Kerensky and other members of the Government were in some way involved in the scheme. Whatever the secret facts might be, enough was disclosed to make the masses utterly lose faith in Kerensky as a friend of the revolution. After that event, the Provisional Government was doomed.

Then the Coalition, the last chapter of preparation for the final struggle. At the time of the Kornilov attempt, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets proposed that an All-Russian Congress be called at Petrograd, to broaden the base of the Provisional Government and create some sort of temporary organ or pre-Parliament to which the Ministry could be responsible until the Constituent Assembly. The basis of the new body was, of course, to be the Soviets: but as the Bolshevik power continued to grow, the Central Committee became anxious, and began to invite all sorts of non-political – and conservative – organizations, such as the Co-operatives, to participate. With the same object, to keep the pre-Parliament from being Bolshevik, it reduced the Soviet membership and increased the representation of the bourgeoisie in the last few days, until, even though the propertied classes had been expressly excluded, it was certain that the majority of the gathering would be 'safe'.

It was a pre-Parliament carefully calculated to vote for the sharing of governmental power with the liberal bourgeois party. So far as plans could effect it, even the pretence of a Socialist regime was at an end.

But these plans were not easy to carry out. Russia had been shocked and frightened by the Kornilov affair, with its ominous threat against the very existence of the Republic. Investigation had proved how widespread was the responsibility for that affair, and there was profound distrust of the bourgeois politicians. In spite of Kerensky's impassioned speech of self-defense, the Assembly proved to be overwhelmingly against his project of Coalition. But on the Government's plea that the national danger demanded it, Coalition was pushed through by a narrow majority. Compromise had won. The Bolsheviks left the Assembly. The new 'representative-consultative' body, the Council of the Russian Republic, with its immense proportion of business men and Cadets, was officially instituted.

From the first the Bolsheviks refused to sanction the existence of the Council.⁹ At its first meeting in the Marinsky Palace, Trotsky

took the tribune in the name of the Bolsheviks, and made a speech which contains the full premises of the Bolshevik insurrection. And when it became clear that there was nothing more to be said in opposition to the compromisers, but only something to be done, the Bolsheviks quitted the Council of the Russian Republic in a body.

That was on October 20.

II

The True Revolution

The true revolution may be said to have begun on that day. For their withdrawal was a sign of the withdrawal of confidence from the Government by the whole mass of the Russian people. Those who were left behind, the hostile Cadets, Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, realized what it meant, and there were many pale faces. Shrieks, curses, execrations, and imploring cries of 'Come back!' followed the departing Bolsheviks. But they did not come back. And it was a blow from which the Council never recovered. It was to go on deliberating and speech making, amid lethargic silence or uproarious tumult, for three weeks – appointing commissions, on land, on foreign affairs; Tereshchenko was to come and make a dull, non-committal statement of international policy; Kerensky was to come twice to appeal with tears for national unity, and once to curse the Bolsheviks, along with the reactionaries, as traitors; there were to be illusory conflicts between the Right and the Left, and a multitude of words added to the immense torrent of hot Russian talk that flows, turbulent and endless, on and on. Only in the last days of its existence did the denatured Council hurriedly pass a resolution to solve the land question at once and to adopt an energetic foreign policy to secure peace. It was too late, then. But they would keep on discussing until that cold grey morning, three weeks after the departure of the Bolsheviks, when they were to be interrupted – all the doors of the great imperial council room suddenly filled with rough-looking big soldiers and sailors, bristling with bayonets, and a sailor shouting, 'No more Council. Run along home.'¹⁰

I had seen the Bolsheviks leave the earlier Assembly. In the corridor I stopped Volodarsky. 'Why are you fellows going?' I

asked. 'We can't work with that counter-revolutionary gang,' he replied. 'They've packed the hall, and now they've put over a combination with the *Kornilovtsy*, to wreck the revolution.' 'What are you going to do?' I asked.

'We're going to call a new All-Russian Convention of the Soviets. That's where the real revolutionary force lies. Then we'll take over the power. All power to the Soviets, where it belongs!'

It was this All-Russian Congress of Soviets that now loomed over Russia like a thunder-cloud. It was recognized to be the beginning of the Bolshevik regime, and by the bourgeoisie, the 'Center' Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists, the Central Army and Fleet Committees, the Peasants Soviets, and especially the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviets itself, no pains were spared to try to prevent it. Solemn resolutions, declarations in the press, delegations from the front, the fleet, from factories, Peasants' Union (reactionary), Union of Cossacks, Knights of St George, Death Battalions . . . In the *Izvestiya*, official organ of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, a determined campaign against the Congress was carried on. The 'Center' Mensheviks and Social Revolutionists, led by the 'Liber-Dans' as they are called, sent instructions far and wide over the country for their party members to influence local Soviets into refusing to send delegates. But the Petrograd Soviet stubbornly insisted. At the date set, November 2, only fifteen delegates out of a possible 900 odd had arrived; the Petrograd Soviet merely postponed the meeting until November 7, and sent another call. The next day more than a hundred arrived – among them many who had been delegated irregularly, over the heads of hostile executive committees. Confident of a majority, the Bolshevik Petrograd Soviet sent word that it would grant increased representation to small Soviets, and seat all delegates. The Central Executive Committee realized that it was beaten, and sent frantic calls over the country to the Soviets to elect Menshevik and Social Revolutionist delegates – a despairing attempt to get a majority of the 'Right' and 'Center'.

In the meantime there were more sinister signs of resistance to the will of the masses. The Government was making preparations to evacuate Petrograd; and Rodzyanko, former president of the Duma and one of the Cadet leaders, declared before a conference of business men in Moscow that the loss of Petrograd would not be a serious blow; for in the first place the revolutionary Petrograd

workers would not cause any more trouble, and in the second place, the revolutionary Baltic Fleet would be disposed of. And then came the declaration of the new government: suppression of mutiny at the front and anarchy in the country by force, and the transfer of the power of 'irresponsible organizations' (that is, the Soviets) to the Duma and Zemstvos.¹¹

The air was full of talk of the Bolshevik 'demonstration' – the *vystuplenie*, or 'coming out' of the workers and soldiers. Bolshevik agitators went the rounds of the Petrograd barracks and factories, insisting that the counter-revolutionary Government wanted to open the front to the Germans, wreck the Constituent Assembly, destroy the Revolution. Lenin made his appearance – in print in the columns of the Bolshevik paper *Rabochii Put* – preaching armed insurrection. On the extreme right the reactionary papers *Novaya Rus* and *Zhivoe Slovo* called for a bloody drowning of the left elements in blood, a pitiless military dictatorship. Burtsev's paper, *Obshchee Delo*, advocated a strong patriotic government of Kornilov, Kaledin and Kerensky! Evidently some of the Bolshevik chiefs themselves opposed the idea of an uprising, preferring to wait for the Constituent Assembly – but Lenin's great voice roared continuously, 'Either armed insurrection or abandon the program of "All Power to the Soviets!"' The counter-revolutionists are preparing to destroy the All-Russian Congress and the Revolution! Volodarsky told me in the corridors of Smolny that the will of the masses of all Russia was that the power should immediately be given to the Soviets. 'The Liber-Dan crowd are sabotaging this Congress,' he said. 'But if they succeed in preventing enough delegates to come here to make a quorum, well, we are realists enough not to depend on that!' Kamenev was of the opinion that as soon as the All-Russian Soviets had declared themselves, the Provisional Government would be forced to resign. . . .

Finally, the intention of the Bolsheviks in general was, I think, expressed best by Trotsky, who made a categorical public statement that the workers and soldiers would make no *vystuplenie* unless provoked, or unless some counter-revolutionary attempt was made. He was perfectly clear in his opinion that the masses of Russia, as represented in the Congress of Soviets, would demand by a huge majority that the power should pass to the Soviets; and of course if the government resisted!

At the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet in Smolny, the night of October 30, Trotsky branded the assertions of the bourgeois press

that the Bolsheviks contemplated armed insurrection as 'an attempt of the reactionaries to discredit and wreck the Congress of Soviets . . . The Petrograd Soviet,' he declared, 'has not ordered any demonstration in the streets. When it will be necessary we will do so, and we are sure we will be supported by the workers and the Petrograd garrison . . . They (the Government) are preparing a counter-revolution; and we will answer with an offensive which will be merciless and to the end!'

An Interview with Trotsky¹²

That very day Trotsky gave me an interview about the projects of the new power – the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' – which Volodarsky had described to me as being in form 'a loose government, sensitive to popular will, giving local forces full play'.¹³ He said:

'The Provisional Government is absolutely powerless. The bourgeoisie is in control, but this control is masked by fictitious coalition with the *moderate* parties. Now, during the revolution, one sees revolts of peasants who are tired of waiting for their promised land and all over the country, in all the toiling classes, the same disgust is evident. The domination of the bourgeoisie is only possible by civil war. The Kornilov method is the only way by which the bourgeoisie can dominate. But it is force which the bourgeoisie lacks. . . . The army is with us. The conciliators and pacificators, Social-Revolutionists and Mensheviks, have lost all authority – because the struggle between the peasants and the landlords, between the workers and the bankers, between the soldiers and the Kornilovist officers, has become more bitter, more irreconcilable than ever. Only by the struggle of this popular mass, only by the victory of the proletarian dictatorship, can the revolution be achieved and the people saved! The Soviets are the most perfect representatives of the people – perfect in their revolutionary experience, in their ideas and objects. Based directly on the army in the trenches, the workers in the factories, and the peasants in the fields, they are the backbone of the Revolution.

'They have tried to create a power disdaining the Soviets, and they have created only powerlessness. Counter-revolutionary schemes of all sorts organize now in the corridors of the Council of the Russian Republic. The Cadet party represents the counter-revolution militant. On the other side, the Soviets represent the

cause of the people. Between the two camps there are no serious groups. It is the inevitable *lutte finale*. The bourgeois counter-revolution organizes all its forces and waits for a moment to attack us. Our answer will be decisive. We will finish the work scarcely begun in February, and advanced during the Kornilov affair. . . .’

He described to me how the new government would be composed; instead of a ministry, the different departments of the state would be directed by a series of *Kollegii*, headed by titular *Commissars*, who would be responsible to the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviets – the new parliament. I asked about the new government’s foreign policy.

‘Our first act,’ said Trotsky, ‘will be to call for an immediate armistice on all fronts, and a conference of the peoples to discuss democratic peace terms. The quantity of democracy we get in the peace settlement depends upon the quantity of revolutionary response there is in Europe. If we create here a government of the Soviets, that will be a powerful factor for immediate peace in Europe; for this government will address itself immediately and directly to the peoples, over the heads of their governments, proposing an armistice. At the moment of the conclusion of peace the pressure of the Russian Revolution will be in the direction of: no annexations, no indemnities, the rights of peoples to dispose of themselves, and a *Federated Republic of Europe*.

‘At the end of this war I see Europe recreated, not by diplomats, but by the proletariat. The Federated Republic of Europe – the United States of Europe – that is what must be. National autonomy no longer suffices. Economic evolution demands the abolition of national frontiers. If Europe is to remain in national groups, then Imperialism will recommence its work. Only a Federated Republic can give peace to Europe – and to the world.’ He smiled, that singularly fine and somewhat melancholy smile of his. ‘But without the action of the European masses, these ends cannot be realized – now.’

It is fashionable among the bourgeoisie to speak of the Bolshevik coup d’état as an ‘adventure’. Adventure it is, and one of the most splendid mankind ever embarked on, sweeping into history at the head of the toiling masses, and staking everything on their vast and simple desires. Peace, land, bread. Why not? Already the machinery was created by which the land of the great estates could be taken over and distributed to the peasants, each according to his powers. Already the factory shop committees were ready to put

into operation workmen's control of industry. The different nationalities of Russia were all ready for months to assume the administration of their own people. In every village, town, city, district and government, Soviets of Workmen's, Soldiers' and Peasants' Delegates were prepared to assume the local powers of government. Liberate the local forces of Russia – how simple, and how tremendous! As for peace – well unless all signs lied, the peoples of the world were sick of and disillusioned with the War. . . . What it meant was simply the liberation of the local forces of the world!

If the Bolsheviki Had Not Won

At that same meeting of the Petrograd Soviet, on October 30, some soldiers, workmen and peasants spoke, revealing very clearly the feeling of the masses, and some officers, members of the Army Central Committees, the Central Committee of Soviets, etc., opposed them. As for these last suffice it to say that they opposed with all their might 'All power to the Soviets' – and there was not a proletarian among them, just as there were no bourgeois among the representatives of the masses. The division was clean.

A peasant described the agrarian disorders in Kaluga Government, which he said were caused by the Government's arresting members of the Land Committees who were trying to distribute the uncultivated fields of the local great estates. 'This Kerensky is nothing but a comrade to the *pomeshchiki* (landlords),' he cried 'And they know we will take the land anyway at the Constituent Assembly, so they are trying to destroy the Constituent Assembly!'

A workman from the *Obukovskii Zavod*, a government shop, described how the superintendents and managers were trying to close down certain departments one by one, complaining of lack of material, of fuel, etc., and how the shop committee had discovered that there was no real necessity for closing down. 'They are trying to drive the revolutionary Petrograd workers out of the city,' he declared. 'It is *provokatsiya* they want to starve us to death, or drive us to violence . . .'

Among the soldiers one began, 'Comrades! I bring you greetings from the spot where men are digging their own graves and call them trenches! We must have peace!'

Another man told of the electoral campaign now being waged in the Fifth Army for the Constituent Assembly. 'The officers, and especially the Mensheviki and Social Revolutionaries, are trying

deliberately to cripple the Bolshevik campaign. Our papers are not allowed to go to the trenches. Our speakers are arrested. Our mail is censored.'

'Why don't you speak about the lack of bread?' cried a voice. 'They are sabotaging the food supply. They want to starve Red Petrograd!'

And so it went. Now is there any truth in the accusation that the Bourgeoisie were trying to wreck the Revolution? I happened, barely two weeks before, to have an exceedingly significant talk with one of the great Russian capitalists, Stepan Georgevitch Lyanozov – 'the Russian Rockefeller', as he is called.

'We manufacturers,' he said, among other things, 'will never consent to allow the workmen, through their unions or any other way, any voice whatsoever in the administration or control of production in our business . . . In the government which is to come there will be no coalition with the democratic parties – an all-Cadet ministry . . .

'How will this new government come into being? I will explain. The Bolsheviks threaten to make an insurrection on November 2. We are prepared. This uprising will be crushed by military force, and from this military force will come the new government . . . Kornilov is not dead yet; he failed, but he still has enough support among the people to succeed . . . And if the Bolsheviks do not rise, *the Propertied class will make a coup d'état at the Constituent Assembly!* No, we do not fear the Bolsheviks. They are cowards, and will run at the first few shots of the troops. They will be suppressed by the military . . . There are the Cossacks, several guard regiments, and the Junkers. That will be more than enough . . . It is my personal opinion that the republic will not last long in Russia. There will be a monarchy.'¹⁴

At the last meeting of the Council of the Russian Republic I was wandering around the corridors and chanced upon Professor Shatsky, a little, mean-faced, dapper man, who is influential in the councils of the Cadet party. I asked what he thought of the much-talked-of Bolshevik *vystuplenie*. He shrugged, sneering:

'They are cattle – *canaille*,' he answered. 'They will not dare, or if they dare they will be soon sent flying. From our point of view it will not be bad, for then they will ruin themselves and have no power in the Constituent Assembly . . . But, my dear sir, allow me to outline to you my plan for a form of government to be submitted to the Constituent Assembly. You see, I am chairman of a commission appointed from this body, in conjunction with the

Government, to work out a constitutional project. . . . We will have a legislative body of two chambers, much as you have in the United States. In the lower chamber will be territorial representatives, and in the upper, representatives of the liberal professions, Zemstvos, trades unions, co-operatives. . . .'¹⁵

On October 29 a special commission of the Council of the Russian Republic and the Ministry hurriedly hammered out two projects for giving the land temporarily to the peasants and for pushing an energetic foreign policy of peace. On the 30th Kerensky suspended the death penalty in the army. Too late. I went over to the Cirque Moderne to one of the Bolshevik meetings which grew more and more numerous every day. The bare, gloomy wooden amphitheatre, with its five tiny lights hanging from a thin wire, was packed from the ring up the steep sweep of grimy benches to the very roof – soldiers, sailors, workmen, women, listening as if their lives depended upon it, and roaring applause. A soldier was speaking – from the 548th Division, whatever and wherever that is:

'Comrades!' he cried, and there was real anguish in his drawn face and despairing gestures. 'The people at the head of things are always appealing to us to sacrifice more, sacrifice more, while those who have everything are left unmolested. . . . We are at war with Germany, and we wouldn't invite German generals to serve on our staff. Well we're at war with the capitalists and yet we invite capitalists into our government . . . The soldier says: Shows me what I am fighting for. Is it the Dardanelles, or is it free Russia? Is it the democracy, or is it the capitalists? If you can prove to me that I am fighting for the Revolution, then I'll go out and fight with capital punishment.

'When the land is to the peasants, and the mills to the workers, and the power to the Soviets, then we'll know we have something to fight for and we'll fight for it!'¹⁶

The Last Days

Under date of October 29, I find entered in my notebook the following news culled from different newspapers:

Mogilev (Staff Headquarters) – Concentration here of Cossacks, and 'Savage Division', several Guard regiments, and the 'Death Battalions' – for action against the Bolsheviks.¹⁷

The Junker regiments from the officers' schools of Pavlovsk, Tsarkoe Selo, Peterhof, ordered by the government to be ready to come to Petrograd. Oranienbaum Junkers arrived in the city.

Part of the Armored Car Division of the Petrograd Garrison stationed at the Winter Palace.

At a meeting of the City Militia of the low-Liteiny district a resolution was passed demanding that all power be given to the Soviets.

Upon orders signed by Trotsky, several thousand rifles delivered by the Sestroretzk government arms factory. Petrograd workers being armed, and assigned in regiments. (This was the creation of the famous Red Guard.)

At Smolny, first meeting since Kornilov days of the Committee to Fight the Counter-Revolution.

At Smolny, meeting of representatives of the Petrograd garrison and formation of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet.

This is just a fragmentary sample of the confused, violent happenings of those feverish days, when everybody sensed that something was going to happen, but no one knew just what. On Sunday, November 4, the Cossacks had planned a *Krestny Khod* – Procession of the Cross – in honor of the Ikon of 1624, by whose virtue Napoleon was driven from Moscow. The Petrograd Soviet published broadcast a proclamation, headed, 'Brothers – Cossacks!'

You, Cossacks, are wanted to be up against us, workmen and soldiers. This plan of Cain is being put into operation by our common enemies – oppressors of the privileged classes, generals, bankers, landlords, former officials, former servants of the Tsar. . . . We are hated by all grafters, rich men, princes, nobility, generals, including your Cossack generals. They are ready at any moment to destroy the Petrograd Council, and crush the Revolution. . . . On November 4 somebody is organizing a Cossack religious procession. It is a question of the free consciousness of every individual whether he will or will not take part in this procession. We do not interfere in this matter and do not cause any obstruction to anybody. . . . However, we warn you, Cossacks! Look out and see to it that under the pretext of a *Krestny Khod*, your Kaledins do not instigate you against workmen, against soldiers. . . .¹⁸

The Military Commander of the Petrograd district hastily called off the procession. On November 1 all the newspapers and all the house-walls of Petrograd carried a government proclamation, signed by Polkovnikov, Commander of Petrograd, ordering the arrest of all persons inciting the soldiers to armed manifestations, forbidding all street meetings, demonstrations, and processions, and ordering the soldiers and the militia to prevent by military force all unauthorized arrests and searches in houses.¹⁹ As if by magic, the walls were covered with proclamations, appeals, warnings, from all the Central Committees, from the Executive Committees of the moderate and conservative parties, calling upon the workmen and soldiers not to come out, not to obey the Petrograd Soviet. For instance, this from the Military Section of the Central Committee of the Social Revolutionist Party:

Again rumours are spreading around the town of an intended *vystuplenie*. What is the source of these rumours? What organization authorizes these agitators who talk of the insurrection? The Bolsheviki, to a question addressed to them in the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, replied in the negative. . . . But these rumours themselves carry with them a great danger. It may easily happen that, not taking into consideration the state of mind of the majority of the workers, soldiers and peasants, the individual hotheads will call out part of the workmen and soldiers on the streets, exciting them to rise. . . . In this terrible hard time which revolutionary Russia is passing through, this insurrection can easily become civil war, and there can result from it the destruction of all organizations of the proletariat, founded with so much pains. The counter-revolutionary plotters are planning to take advantage of this insurrection to destroy the revolution, open the front to Wilhelm, and wreck the Constituent Assembly. . . . Stick stubbornly to your posts! Do not come out! . . .

Meanwhile from all sides the situation was growing tenser day by day. The Bolshevik papers steadily counselled that the All-Russian Soviets should assume the power, end the war, give the land to the peasants. On the extreme right, such organs as Purishkevitch's *Narodny Tribuna*, the illegal monarchist paper – and the *Novaya Rus*, *Zhivoe Slovo*, etc., openly advocated pogroms – massacres of the Jews, of the Soviets. Mysterious individuals circulated

around the long lines of miserable people waiting in queue, long cold hours for bread and milk, whispering that the Jews had cornered the food supply – and that while the people starved, the Soviet members at Smolny lived luxuriously. But the Bolshevik papers spoke, and the masses listened, and were quiet – waiting.

A Picture of Petrograd

Petrograd presented a curious spectacle in those days. In the factories the committee rooms filled with stacks of arms, couriers came and went, the Red Guard drilled. . . . In all the barracks meetings every night, and all day long interminable hot arguments. On the streets the crowds thickened toward gloomy evening, pouring in slow, voluble tides up and down the Nevsky, bunched by the hundreds around some new proclamation pasted on a wall, and fighting for the newspapers. . . . At Smolny there were new strict guards at the door, at both the gates and outer gates, demanding everybody's pass. Inside the committee rooms hummed and whirled all day and all night, hundreds of soldiers and armed workmen slept on the door, wherever they could find room. Upstairs in the great hall which had been the ball-room of that one-time convent school for aristocratic girls, a thousand soldiers and workmen crowded for the uproarious all-night meetings of the Petrograd Soviet. From the thousand miles of battle-front the twelve millions of men in Russia's armies moved under the wind of revolt, with a noise like the sea rising, poured their hundreds upon hundreds of delegations into the capital, crying 'Peace! Peace!' There was a convention of the All-Russian Factory Shop Committees at Smolny, passing hot resolutions about the control of workers over industry. The peasants were coming in, denouncing the Central Committee of the Peasants' Soviets as traitors, and demanding that all power be given to the Soviets. . . .

And in the city the theatres were all going, the Russian Ballet appearing in new and extravagant spectacles, Chaliapin singing at the Narodny Dom. Hundreds of gambling clubs functioned feverishly all night long, with much champagne flowing, stakes of 20,000 roubles . . . Private entertainments were given by the millionaire speculators, who were buying and selling for fabulous prices the food, the munitions, the clothing . . . On the Nevsky every night thousands of prostitutes in jewels and expensive furs walked up and down, crowded the cafés . . . Monarchist plots, German

spying, smugglers hatching schemes . . . And in the rain, the bitter chill, the great throbbing city under grey skies rushing faster and faster toward – what?

III

Now while everybody was waiting for the Bolsheviks to appear suddenly on the streets one morning and begin to shoot down people with white collars on, the real insurrection took its way quite naturally and openly.

One of the recent blundering actions of the Provisional Government had been to order the Petrograd garrison to the front, with the object of replacing it with loyal troops. To this order the Petrograd Soviet protested, alleging that it was the intention of the Government to remove from the revolutionary capital the revolutionary troops defending it. The General Staff insisted. Thereupon the Petrograd Soviet agreed in principle, at the same time stipulating that it be allowed to send a delegation to the front to confer with General-in-Chief Cheremisov, and agree with him on the troops which were to come to Petrograd. The Petrograd garrison also appointed a delegation; but an order from the General Staff forbade the committee to leave the city. To the Soviet delegation General Cheremisov insisted that the Petrograd garrison should obey his orders without question, and that the General Staff would send to Petrograd whatever troops it saw fit.²⁰

At the same time the Staff in command of the Petrograd District began quietly to act. The Junker artillery was drawn into the Winter Palace. Patrols of Cossacks made their appearance, the first since July, and great heavy armoured motor cars mounted with machine-guns began to lumber up and down the Nevsky . . . The military section of the Petrograd Soviet demanded that a Soviet representative be admitted to the meetings of the staff. Refused. Petrograd Soviet asked that no orders be issued without the approval of the military section. Refused. On October 29 the representatives of all the regiments of the Petrograd garrison held a meeting at Smolny, at which they formed the famous Military Revolutionary Committee, and declared formally, 'The Petrograd garrison no longer recognizes the Provisional Government. The Soviet is our government. We will obey only the orders of the Petrograd Soviet, through the Military Revolutionary Committee.'

On November 5, the Government announced that it had sufficient force to suppress any attempted rising. That night Kerensky ordered the suppression both of the extreme right papers, *Novaya Rus* and *Zhivoe Slovo*, and of the Bolshevik papers, *Rabochii Put* and *Soldat*. An hour after the Junkers had closed the offices and printing shops, and put the Government seals on the doors, a company of soldiers from one of the Guard regiments broke the seals in the name of the Military Revolutionary Committee. At the same time other troops from Smolny seized the printing plant of the *Russkaya Volia*, a bourgeois paper, and began to print the *Rabochii Put*. In trying to prevent this, Mayer, Chief of the Militia, was shot by the Red Guard.

During the night several transports full of Bolshevik sailors came from Kronstadt, with the cruiser *Aurora*. The Government ordered that the bridges over the Neva be raised, so that the regiments across the river and the workmen from the Vyborg district could not come to aid the rebels. The Kronstadt sailors made a landing under fire, in which several people were killed, and closed the bridges. In the evening bands of Junkers stationed themselves at street corners near the Winter Palace and began to requisition automobiles; and after some hours the Bolshevik troops began to do the same.

Working-Class Assumes Power

Tuesday morning, the 6th, the people of Petrograd awoke to find the city plastered with proclamations signed 'Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates!'

To the Population of Petrograd. Citizens! Counter-Revolution has raised its criminal head. The *Kornilovtsy* are mobilizing their forces in order to crush down the All-Russian Congress of the Soviets and break up the Convention of the Constituent. At the same time the Pogromists may attempt to call upon the people of Petrograd for trouble and bloodshed. The Petrograd Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates takes upon itself the guarding of revolutionary order in the city against counter-revolutionary and pogrom attempts.

The Petrograd garrison will not allow any violence or disorders. The population is invited to arrest hooligans and Black

Hundred²¹ agitators and take them to the Soviet Commissars at the nearest barracks. At the first attempt of the dark forces to make trouble on the streets of Petrograd, whether robbery or fighting, the criminals will be rubbed away from the face of the earth!

Citizens! We call upon you to maintain complete quiet and self-possession. The cause of order and Revolution is in strong hands.²²

At Smolny that night meeting of the old Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviets – its last – to welcome the delegates to the new Convention. Futile resolutions against the demonstration, in favour of complete submission to the Provisional Government . . . At the Council of the Republic, Kerensky thundered that the Government would suppress all uprisings mercilessly . . . At the Winter Palace heated conferences, expulsion of impotent Colonel Polkovnikov as Commander of Petrograd, appointment of a special committee, headed by Kishkin, to re-establish order . . . Call to the Junkers of Pavlovsk, of Tsarkoe, to come – and replies that they dare not, Bolshevik troops in the way . . . Calls to the Cossacks – who reply that they will not come out unless they are supported by infantry . . .

At midnight members of the Pavlovsk regiment, who have secreted themselves in the meeting room of the General Staff, overhear the plans that are being made to arrest the Bolshevik leaders, capture the Smolny and disperse the All-Russian convention. Immediately they post guards at all the entrances to the Staff, begin arresting officers and members of the Ministry, take them to Smolny – where no one knows what to do with them. Released with apologies. And then, two hours later, Junkers seizing the principal points of the city, the Military Revolutionary Committee gets into action. Ministers and Staff officers to be arrested, armoured cars ordered out to hold the street corners. Bolshevik troops sent to seize the State Bank, the Telephone Station, drive the Junkers out of the Telegraph Station and draw a cordon around the Winter Palace . . . But Kerensky has already fled.

The masses are in power . . . And on the morning of November 13, after the defeat of Kerensky's Cossack army, Lenin and Trotsky sent through me to the revolutionary proletariat of the world this message:

‘Comrades! Greeting from the first proletarian republic of the world. We call you to arms for the international social revolution.’

The Liberator, March 1918 (written 17 November 1917)

NOTES

This is Reed’s first substantial narrative of the Revolution. It contains some of the documentation which he subsequently used in *Ten Days* but largely omits crucial events – the opening session of the Soviet, the capturing of the Winter Palace – which figure so prominently in later accounts. He repeatedly emphasizes that the Revolution was not a forcible seizure of power against the will of the Russian people. A year later, when he wrote *Ten Days*, he was making this point with even greater urgency.

1. Milyukov was Minister for Foreign Affairs in the first Provisional Government led by Prince Lvov, March–May 1917. His objective, after the abdication of the Tsar, was not a republic but a constitutional monarchy. See document 14, note 7.
2. After accepting the advice of Cheremisov not to send troops from the Northern Front to Petrograd, Kerensky issued a separate order to the Third Cavalry Corps under General Krasnov to return to the capital and intervene. After taking Gatchina and Tsarskoe Selo, Krasnov’s forces were defeated by Bolshevik troops at Pulkovo Heights on 12 November. Gatchina was soon afterwards surrendered by Krasnov without further hostilities.
3. The forces of the Committee of Public Safety surrendered in Moscow on 15 November. Robert Daniels, in *Red October: The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917* (New York, 1967) p. 207, estimates that the Bolsheviks alone lost some 500 men killed in the fighting.
4. Reed uses this scene, which took place on the evening of 16 November, in *Ten Days*, pp. 243–4.
5. Miliukov resigned as Foreign Minister after protests at his determination to pursue Tsarist war aims. See notes to document 3.
6. The Soviets did not assume power during the July Days though this was the objective of some of the organizers of the revolt. See Alexander Rabinowich, *Prelude to Revolution: The Petrograd Bolsheviks and the July 1917 Uprising* (Bloomington, Ind., 1972).
7. Allegations that the ‘internationalists’ of the RSDRP (not only the Leninists but also the journal *Nashe Slovo*) were being funded as part of the *Revolutionierungspolitik* of the German government had been made since 1915 by the former Duma deputy and ex-Bolshevik Grigor Alexinsky. There is circumstantial evidence to suggest that the Lenin group did indeed receive German funds up to the summer of 1917 and documentary evidence that Lenin received funds from the Polish Bolshevik Jacob Hanecki (Fürstenberg), a business partner in Copenhagen and Stockholm of the German socialist Alexander Helphand

(Parvus) and the German agent Georg Sklarz. Documentary evidence exists of an appeal for funds to the German government in November 1917, after the Bolsheviks had come to power.

Between May and July 1917 allegations that the Bolsheviks were in the pay of German agents reached the Provisional Government from other sources (Albert Thomas and the French Military Mission; the Czech agent Emanuel Voska). During the July Days Justice Minister Pereverzev leaked information to the press before government inquiries had been completed. Lenin and Zinoviev fled Petrograd, but the inadequacy of the evidence and a changing political climate prevented an indictment of the Bolsheviks for treason.

On 2 February 1918, Edgar Sisson, representative of the US Committee of Public Information, obtained documents in Petrograd which pointed to German-Bolshevik collusion before the Bolshevik seizure of power. In February and March he obtained intercepts of communications between the Soviet government and their negotiators in Brest-Litovsk which, he claimed, provided further evidence of complicity. Sisson released his materials to the American press on 15 September 1918, and in October they were published by the Committee on Public Information under the title *The German-Bolshevik Conspiracy*.

Historians now accept that, while some of the Sisson documents may have originated in the investigations of the Provisional Government, others were either altered or forged by the Petrograd journalist Anton Martynovich Ossendovsky. George F. Kennan argued in *Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1920*, vol. 1: *Russia Leaves the War* (Princeton, NJ, [1956]), that 'these documents were unquestionably forgeries from beginning to end' (p. 454). See also Helena M. Stone, 'Another Look at the Sisson Forgeries and their Background', *Soviet Studies*, 37 (January 1985) 90-102. Despite their uncertain provenance, some groups in the United States sought to use the Sisson documents to support military intervention. Catherine Breshkovskaya, warmly admired in America as the 'little grandmother of the Revolution', received widespread publicity for her accusations. The following exchange, recorded in *Brewing and Liquor Interests and German and Bolshevik Propaganda* . . . (Washington, DC, 1919) III, 247, is from her evidence to the Overman Committee on 14 February 1919:

Senator Nelson: Do you believe that Lenin and Trotsky were the tools of Germany?

Mrs Breshkovskaya: I do not believe it; I am sure of it, sir.

Senator Nelson: Do you believe that they received German money?

Mrs Breshkovskaya: Yes.

In a pamphlet published by the Russian Information Bureau, Breshkovskaya claimed that the German Ambassador, Count von Mirbach, 'daily gave orders to Lenin and Trotsky': Breshkovskaya, *Russia and the World*, (New York, [1919]) p. 19.

Reed, seeking to discredit Sisson's material and the activities of Breshkovskaya and other anti-Bolshevik publicists, argued in a *Liber-*

ator pamphlet in 1918 that the Sisson documents were 'mainly forgeries'. On the reaction of American liberals to the Sisson documents, see Christopher Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* (New York, 1962).

8. On the reimposition of the death penalty, see document 7, note 7.
9. The Bolsheviks were not as consistent in their attitude towards the Council of the Republic or Pre-Parliament as Reed suggests. The Bolshevik Central Committee voted on 4 October to participate in the Council, but, to Lenin's satisfaction, on 18 October decided to stage a walk-out when the Council met for the first time on the 20th. See document 5, note 3.
10. Reed was given an account of the dispersal of the Council by a participant immediately afterwards. See *Ten Days*, p. 77.
11. With the Germans 250 miles from Petrograd in October, the Provisional Government made plans to evacuate the capital. Since the Bolsheviks were weaker in Moscow, there were also political grounds for such a move. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Kerensky was planning to surrender Petrograd to the Germans.
12. With some minor alterations, Reed incorporated this interview with Trotsky in *Ten Days*, pp. 50–2.
13. In *Ten Days*, p. 50, he corrected this attribution to Karakhan.
14. Reed used the interview with Lyanozov in *Ten Days*, pp. 7–8.
15. Shatsky was a member of the Special Commission of the Provisional Government charged with drafting a constitution to be presented to the Constituent Assembly. In *Ten Days*, pp. 58–9, the interview with Shatsky is dated 5 November.
16. The Cirque Moderne meeting appears in *Ten Days*, pp. 21–2.
17. The 'Savage Division' was the Caucasian Native Cavalry Division. Its attachment by Kornilov to the Third Cavalry Corps under General Krymov was interpreted by Kerensky as a sign of sinister intent. During Kornilov's action, however, it was neutralized by, among others, delegates of a congress of Muslim nationalities then meeting in Petrograd.
18. See *Ten Days*, p. 45.
19. The proclamation is quoted in full in *Ten Days*, pp. 47–8.
20. General Cheremisov was the Commander in Chief of the Northern Front and based in Pskov. In the event, he advised Kerensky *against* sending troops from Pskov into Petrograd. See above, note 2.
21. 'Black Hundreds': see document 1, note 3.
22. The Military Revolution Committee, a putative command over the Petrograd garrison, was set up by the Petrograd Soviet on 22 October 1917 at the suggestion of the Bolsheviks, ostensibly in anticipation of a German attack but also for fear that the Provisional Government might seek to move the garrison to the front. On 29 October the Bolsheviks resolved that their own Military Organization should enter the MRC. It was by persuading the Petrograd garrison to transfer its allegiance to the MRC that the Bolsheviks and Left SRs succeeded in overthrowing the Provisional Government. See Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power* (New York, 1976)

12

Red Russia: Kerensky, II

It is just a month since I wrote the first part of this article. Kerensky saw the truth; but he could not gauge the excitation of spirit, the deep trouble of the slow-moving Russian masses. He thought the radical democratic program could be worked out slowly, by means of Constituent Assemblies and such like, after the victorious end of the War which would have made 'the world safe for democracy'. The idea of Socialism, or a Proletarian State, subsisting in the imperfect capitalist world of today, was to him inconceivable.

The Bolshevik peace cry had swelled into a chorus which drowned every other sound. It was at this time that a prominent American visiting Russia said to me, 'There is only one real party in Russia – the peace party.'

But Kerensky defied the Bolsheviks, and commenced the struggle which ended when he fled, alone and in disguise from the battlefield where he had been defeated.

By that act he lost whatever popularity he had retained among the revolutionary masses . . . He hardly realized this, for after a silence he addressed to Russia an open letter in which he said:

'Be citizens, don't finish with your own hands the country and the revolution for which you have struggled these eight months! Leave the fools and traitors! Return to the people, return to the service of the country and the revolution!

'It is I, Kerensky, who say this . . .

'Pull yourselves together!'

In that hysterical communication may be discerned all the traits of Kerensky's character – the incomprehension of the movement, sympathy for the people, absolute and utter disbelief in the revolutionary method, nervous bitterness, wounded pride . . . He could not then have grasped – and cannot now – the fact that the masses of poor people he loved and gave his life to help have turned away from him. At the moment he counts actually less in Russia than Bryan does at home . . .¹

Liberator, April 1918 (written 25 November 1917)

NOTES

Kerensky left Petrograd on 7 November in an attempt to rally support for the Provisional Government. The Winter Palace fell at 2 a.m. on the 8th. The battle at Pulkovo on 12 November ended Kerensky's hope of forcing a return to Petrograd. See document 11, note 2. See also Richard Abraham, *Alexander Kerensky: The First Love of the Revolution* (London, [1987]) pp. 318–27.

1. Bryan, several times Democratic candidate for President and the standard bearer of the populist wing of the party, resigned as Wilson's Secretary of State in 1915. Reed uses him here as a type of those politicians overtaken and then discarded by the swift movement of events.

Part II

1918

Chronology: John Reed in 1918

- January Louise Bryant leaves Petrograd for the United States on the 20th, Reed addresses the third All-Russian Congress of Soviets on the 23rd. Edgar Sisson, representing the Committee on Public Information, is in the audience as Reed speaks. Trotsky proposes to make Reed the Soviet Consul in New York. An intrigue by Sisson, Colonel Raymond Robins and Alex Gumberg causes the appointment to be withdrawn at Lenin's insistence. Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly on the 19th (see document 26).
- February Reed writes 'The Origins of Workers' Control in Russia' (document 13). He leaves Petrograd in early February. Sisson arranges for Reed to be stranded in Christiania (now Oslo), Norway, without visa, from 19 February. His letters to Bryant and others are intercepted and forwarded to Washington. Reed is identified as a 'suspect' in Military Intelligence Branch reports. He cables Russia offering to return, but receives no reply.
- March The arrival of Robert Minor in Christiania brings him news from New York. Reed begins work on a book about the Russian Revolution (documents 14 I-II).
- April *The Masses* trial begins on the 15th, in Reed's absence, and ends on the 27th with a hung jury. Reed arrives in New York on the 28th, and is held for eight hours while being interrogated by federal agents. His papers are seized and withheld by the State Department 'for examination'. On the 29th he posts \$2000 bail on the *Masses* indictment.

- May Reed writes in *The Liberator* and the *New York Call* about the Russian Revolution. He begins an extensive speaking tour to overflow audiences. Reed sends a memorandum on US policy towards Russia to Colonel House (document 22, notes). A Military Intelligence report of a speech by Reed at Carnegie Hall, on the 28th, concludes, 'Not a word of praise or promise of support of the United States Government, and not a note of patriotic American music was heard at this great meeting, which, for the sentiments uttered, might have been held in Bolshevik Russia.' In Kansas City, Rose Pastor Stokes is convicted on the 24th on three counts of violating the Espionage Act. Receives a ten-year sentence for writing in a letter to the *Kansas City Star*, 'I am for the people, while the government is for the profiteers.' Reed lectures on conditions in Russia to enthusiastic audiences (document 16). On the 31st Reed is arrested in Philadelphia for inciting to riot, and released on bail of \$5000.
- June Eugene Debs is indicted for ten counts of violating the Espionage Act after a speech in Canton, Ohio. Reed defends the Russian Revolution in *The Liberator* (document 17).
- July Reed visits Debs in Terre Haut, Indiana, and then travels to Chicago for the trial of 101 Wobblies. He spends two weeks with Louise Bryant at Truro, Cape Cod, and rents an apartment at 1 Patchin Place, Greenwich Village. *The Independent* publishes Reed's 'The Case for the Bolsheviks' (document 20). Reed's "'Kerensky is coming!'" is published in *The Liberator* (document 21).
- August Allied intervention begins in Siberia and northern Russia.
- September Reed resigns from the staff of *The Liberator*. William Haywood receives a twenty-year sentence in the Wobbly trial in Chicago. On the 13th Reed de-

nounces intervention in Russia before an audience of 4,000 in the Bronx. He is arrested the following morning for sedition and bailed for \$5,000. Debs, at his trial in Cleveland on the 14th, says, 'While there is a lower class, I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free.' Reed prepares a *Liberator* pamphlet denouncing the Sisson documents as anti-Bolshevik forgeries. The second *Masses* trial begins. Reed is charged with conspiracy to violate the Espionage Act, attempting to interfere with conscription, and causing disaffection among the troops. He sends his second memorandum to Colonel House (document 22).

October Reed testifies on 3 October. The trial ends with a hung jury again. The jury is split seven to five in favour of conviction. At the Jacob Schwartz Memorial Meeting, Reed gives an account of the events of 10 November 1917 (document 23).

November Writing to Upton Sinclair on the 6th, Reed defends the revolution. On the 7th ('The Second Day', document 25) he publishes an account of the events of 8 November 1917. Armistice comes into effect on the 11th. A socialist parade up Fifth Avenue is attacked and dispersed by uniformed soldiers and sailors. Reed publishes an account of the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly in *The Revolutionary Age* (document 26). His papers are returned by the State Department and Reed begins writing *Ten Days that Shook the World* in a rented room above Polly Holliday's Greenwich Village Inn.

13

The Origins of Workers' Control in Russia

The capitalist press has diligently spread abroad all sorts of stories about the foolish conduct of the Russian industrial workers during the Revolution; of their extravagant demands, their ignorance, and the brutality with which they have treated manufacturers and technical experts. The outside world has received the impression that the Russian workingman gets enormous wages, refuses to work, and that in short he has ruined Russian industry.

It is true that in Russia industry is at a low ebb. In the first place, coal was impossible to procure for a long time, because Kaledin and his Cossacks had control of the Donets Basin, and after them the Germans; machinery has deteriorated, owing to the fact that no new parts have come from abroad for two long years and more, and the technical experts, engineers, etc., faithful to the capitalist class, at first refused to submit to the direction of the workmen's committees; and last of all, the working class itself has been too hotly absorbed in politics, and in fighting the enemies of the Revolution – from Kornilov to Kerensky, Kaledin, the Ukrainian Rada, Germany, the Czechoslovaks and the Allies. But on the technical side, if Russian industry is ruined, it is the manufacturers and owners who are to blame – they who tried to starve the Revolution by shutting down the factories and mines, by ruining organization, wrecking the railroads, deliberately destroying the machinery of industry, and flooding the mines.

Many of the tales about extravagant labor demands, of workmen's control committees which broke down, etc., are of course true. But the important thing is that till the November Revolution, the Russian workmen as a whole were still over-worked, under-paid (except in certain special factories), and that at the same time there was growing up all over Russia a spontaneous industrial organization capable of being at least the promising framework of a new industrial order.

The three cardinal demands of the November Revolution were,

Peace, Land to the Peasants, and Workers' Control of Industry, and of these three the last point of Workers' Control was perhaps the most important, because the tendency of new Russia is more and more toward the abolition of the political state, and the evolution of industrial democracy.

The history of labor organization in Russia is very brief. Before the 1905 Revolution no labor unions, in the strict sense of the word, existed. The only recognized workmen's representation was the election of a *starosta*, or 'elder', much as the *starostas* are elected in Russian villages, and even in Russian prisons, and with about as much power. In 1905, some 200,000 workmen joined the unions. Stolypin suppressed them. Some little unions persisted, but they were finally crushed, their funds seized, their leaders sent to Siberia. After that the unions existed half-secretly, with a membership over all Russia of about 10,000. During the war, however, all attempts at labor organization were ruthlessly stamped out, and workmen discovered in any connection with labor organizations were sent to the front.

The Revolution released the workers partly from this bondage, and pushed toward rapid organization. After four months of the Revolution the first conference of the Professional Unions of All-Russia was held – 200 delegates representing more than 1,400,000 workers.¹ Two months later the membership was calculated at more than 3,000,000, according to the Ryazanov report; it is now more than double that number.

Now these Professional Unions (*Professionalnye Soyuzy*) were modelled on the French syndicats, with the addition of government co-operation suggested by the German labor-union system. They were mainly concerned with the fight for shorter hours, higher wages – in short, the routine business of labor-unions everywhere. For instance, they established a system of Conciliation Chambers for the hearing of industrial disputes – for industrial arbitration under government supervision. But their important work was the organization of all the workers into great industrial unions, in the dissolution of all the petty craft organizations, merging them into the big unions. Thus in the Government gun-factory at Sestroretzk, for example, all those who worked upon the manufacture of rifles – the men who forged barrels, the machinists who fitted the mechanism, the carpenters who made the stock – all were members of the Metal-Workers' Union.²

But the Professional Unions, in spite of their importance,

occupied a secondary position in the workers' minds. In the first place, the Soviets, half-political, half-economic, absorbed their energies; in the second place, those unique organizations, spontaneously created by the Russian Revolution, the Factory Shop Committees (*Fabrichnye Zavodskie Komitety*) required their attention. These latter are the real foundation of the Workers' Control of Industry.³

The Factory Committees originated in the government munitions factories. At the outbreak of the Revolution, most of the administrators of the government factories, chiefly military officers who brutalized the workers with all the privilege of military law, ran away. Unlike the private manufacturers, these government officials had no interest in the business. The workers, in order to prevent the closing down of the factory, had to take charge of the administration. In some places, as at Sestroretzk, this meant taking charge of the town also. And these government plants were run with such inefficiency, so much corruption, that the Workers' Committee, although it raised wages, shortened hours, and hired more hands, actually increased production and reduced expenses – at the same time completing new buildings begun by dishonest contractors, constructing a fine new hospital, and giving the town its first sewerage system. With these government plants the Factory Shop Committees had a comparatively easy time. For a long time after the revolution there was no authority to question the authority of the workers, and finally when the Kerensky government began to interfere, the workers had complete control. Working as they were on munitions, with standing orders, there was no excuse for closing down, and in fuel and raw materials the government itself supplied them. Although many times under the inefficient Kerensky government the government shops were in danger of closing down, and the Shop Committees had to send their delegates to Baku to buy oil, to Kharkov for coal, and to Siberia for iron.

From Sestroretzk the Shop Committee spread like wildfire to other government shops – then to private establishments working on government orders, then to private industries, and finally to factories which were closed down at the beginning of the Revolution. First the movement was confined to Petrograd, but soon it began to spread over all Russia, and just before the November revolution took place the first All-Russian Congress of Factory Shop Committees. At the present time, representatives of the

Factory Shop Committees and representatives of the Professional Unions make up the Department of Labor of the new government, and compose the Council of Workers' Control.

The first Committees in the private factories were vainly engaged in keeping the industry going, in the face of lack of coal, of raw materials, and especially, the sabotage of the owners and the administrative force, who wanted to shut down. It was a question of life and death to the workers. The newly-formed Shop Committees were forced to find out how many orders the factory had, how much fuel and raw material were on hand, what was the income from the business – in order to determine the wages that could be paid – and to control itself discipline of the workers, and the hiring and discharging of men. In factories which the owners insisted they could not keep open, the workers were forced to take charge themselves, and run the business as well as they could.

Some of the experiments were very interesting. For example, there was a cotton factory in Novgorod which was abandoned by its owners. The workers – inexperienced in administration, – took charge. The first thing they did was to manufacture enough cloth for their own needs, and then for the needs of the other workers in Novgorod. After that the Shop Committee sent men out to factories in other cities, offering to exchange cotton cloth for other articles they needed – shoes, implements; they exchanged cloth for bread with the peasants; and finally they began to take orders from commercial houses. For their raw material they had to send men south to the cotton-growing country, and then with the railroad employees' union they had to pay with cloth for the transportation of the cotton. So with fuel from the coal mines of the Don.

In the great private industries which remained open, the Factory Shop Committees appointed delegates to confer with the administration about getting fuel, raw material, and even orders. They had to keep account of all that came into the factory, and all that went out. They made a valuation of the entire plant, so as to find out how much the factory was worth, how much stock was held, what the profits were. Everywhere the workers' greatest difficulty was with the owners, who concealed profits, refused orders, and tried in every way to destroy the efficiency of the plant, so as to discredit the workers' organizations. All counter-revolutionary or anti-democratic engineers, clerks, foremen, etc. were discharged by the Factory Shop Committees, nor could they enter any other factory without the recommendation of the Factory Shop Committee of

their preceding place of employment. Workers were required to join the union before they were hired, and the Factory Shop Committee supervised the carrying out of all union scales and regulations.

The fight by the capitalists against these Factory Shop Committees was extremely bitter. Their work was hindered at every step. The most extravagant lies have been published in the capitalist press about 'lazy workmen' who spent all their time in talking when they should be working – while as a matter of fact the Factory Shop Committees usually had to work eighteen hours a day; about the enormous size of the Committees – while for example at Putilov Works, the largest factory in Petrograd, employing about 40,000 men, the Central Factory Shop Committee, representing eleven departments and 46 shops, consisted of twenty-two men. Even Skobelev, 'Socialist' Minister of Labor under the Kerensky government, issued an order in the first part of September that the Factory Shop Committees should only meet 'after working-hours', and no longer receive wages for their time on Committee business. As a matter of fact, the Factory Shop Committees were all that kept Russian industry from complete disintegration during the days of the Coalition government. Thus the new Russian industrial order was born of necessity.

Each Factory Shop Committee has five departments: Production and Distribution, Fuel, Raw Materials, Technical Organization of the Industry, and Demobilization (or changing from a war to a peace basis). In each district, all the factories of one industry combined to send two delegates to a district council, and each district council sent one delegate to the city council – which in turn had its delegates in the All-Russian Council, in the Central Committee of the Professional Unions and in the Soviet.

Not all workmen are union workmen in Russia; but every factory worker must be represented in the Factory Shop Committee. And the Factory Shop Committee supplements and completes the work of the Professional Unions, and absolutely controls production at its very source.

This method of controlling production by the workers, sprung spontaneously from the Russian revolution, has just been legalized by the new Workmen's and Peasants' Government of the Russian Republic. Also it has become possible, through the power of the government, for the workmen themselves to take over and operate all plants whose owners cannot keep them open. With unlimited

credit behind them, and the huge, organized force of the government, there is no reason why the workers cannot hire engineers and technical staff, or why, with such training, they may not be able, in a few years, to take over the greater part of Russian industrial enterprise. With the control of the means of production and distribution in the hands of the popular government, the main obstacle to the achievement of industrial democracy has vanished.

The Revolutionary Age, 23 November 1918 (written February 1918)

NOTES

This article was largely intended to counter Western attacks on the social and industrial disorganization which followed upon the Bolshevik Revolution. Reed had earlier quoted Kerensky (document 9) blaming the disorganization upon the Tsarist regime.

1. The First All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions was held in Moscow from 7–14 January 1918.
2. The example of the Sestroretzk arsenal, located on the Gulf of Finland and the river Sestra some 34 km north-east of present-day Leningrad, was mentioned several times by Reed in articles in 1918 and 1919 as an example of the syndicalist creativity which the Revolution unleashed. The repudiation of 'the petty craft organizations' and the formation of industrial unions was the form of unionism which the IWW (the 'Wobblies') exemplified, and which Reed passionately endorsed at the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920. The American journalist Bessie Beatty visited the arsenal in November 1917, where she was told that, out of a workforce of 6,500 men, some 5,000 were Bolsheviks. Beatty, *The Red Heart of Russia* (New York, 1918) p. 284. It was the strength of the Bolsheviks at Sestroretzk which enabled Trotsky, as chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, to order the factory to hand over 5,000 rifles to the Red Guard on the eve of the Bolshevik *coup d'état*. Trotsky, *From October to Brest-Litovsk* (New York, 1919) pp. 47–8. Other visitors to Russia, such as Edward A. Ross, who was taken there by Alexander Gumberg in December 1917, went to Sestroretzk to look at the impact of the Revolution on industrial organization.
3. The Bolsheviks eventually deprived the factory committees of their institutional independence by incorporating them within the trade unions. See S. A. Smith, *Red Petrograd: Revolution in the Factories 1917–1918* (Cambridge, 1983).

14

Two Manuscripts on the Revolution

I Introduction [to a Book]

If I were asked what I consider most characteristic of the Russian Revolution, I should say, the vast simplicity of its processes. Like Russian life as described by Tolstoy and Chekhov, like the course of Russian history itself, the Revolution seemed to be endowed with the patient inevitability of mounting sap in spring, of the tides of the sea. The French Revolution, in its causes and architecture, has always seemed to me an essentially human ~~creation~~¹ affair, the creature of intellect, theatrical; the Russian Revolution, on the other hand, is like a force of nature.

Eighteenth-century Europe heard from the wreck of a rotten feudalism voices preaching *Contrat Social*, and learned with glad surprise that Nature is a democrat.² In Russia, however, that conception was always a part of the character of the people. While I realize the danger of such generalizations, nevertheless I think that fundamentally the Russian masses never suspected that men were not born equal. The poorest, most ignorant peasant or workman, if set down in the presence of the Imperial Court, would have addressed the Tsar as 'Nikolai Alexandrovich', and not been in the least embarrassed – any more than he is now when he sits as delegate in the lordly hall of the old Council of Empire at the Marinsky Palace.

More than that, essential communist that he is, the Russian has deep down in his soul an utter disbelief in private property. The peasants always looked upon the great estates as their own, simply because they have worked them for generations; and they did not hesitate to steal or poach. The same thing is true of the workmen and their factories.

Under bloody tyrannies, in the worst days of serfdom, during the blackest periods of bureaucratic oppression, the Russian people never altered their natural philosophy. At times they stoned to

death a too-merciless task-master; at times they burned down a Boyar's or *pomeshchik's* manor; occasionally they massacred a pope, or even hurled a Tsar down from his throne – but it was always like the action of too much steam in a tight boiler. For the most part they submitted to force with a sort of stubborn fatalism that baffled revolutionists and reformers for a century.

Over the heads of the masses the middle-class intelligentsia absorbed all the liberal ideas of Western Europe, formed revolutionary movements, tinkered with terrorism, constitutionalism, blew up dignitaries, was executed, exiled to Siberia, and flooded the country with every sort of propaganda. For more than a quarter of a century the people absorbed this propaganda, listened to everything that was said, took what they wanted – and went their way.

The peasants in particular possessed ideas of their own. Landlords they considered their natural enemies; government officials were dishonest and cruel; but for a long time the peasants insisted that the Tsar was just and merciful, and would remedy all evils *if he only knew what was going on*. Toward the church their attitude was also extremely characteristic. Like simple people everywhere religion was to them a spiritual force quite independent of its ministers and practical apparatus. A soldier in Petrograd told me of an incident of the Russo-Japanese war. His regiment arrived in a small Manchurian town on the way to the front, and the men decided that they wanted to go to mass. After hunting all over the town the local priest was discovered in a drunken sleep. The soldiers kicked him violently awake. 'Get up and give us mass, you drunken pig!' they shouted at him, and led him to the church, cuffing him all the way. Then there is the true story of Georg Kozlovsky, an enthusiastic free-thinker, who went among the Volga villages to 'arouse the people'. It was Sunday. On the open village street the young missionary gathered the people together, and began to inveigh against the Church.

'The Church is a dishonest institution composed of liars and thieves who prey upon the people, and live in fatness and ease from the sweat of the workers,' he said.

'That's true,' murmured the audience, solemnly.

'The Government uses the Church as a spy and a provocator. The Church helps to send the friends of the people to Siberia – the Church stands beside the martyrs of the people when the soldiers shoot them down!'

'Yes, that's true! Shame! Shame!'

'And by what does the Church blind and delude the people? By the name of God. God? Who is God? Can there be a God when such things go on in Russia? There is no God!'

The peasants were gravely silent.

'I will prove to you that there is no God. Here is an ikon. See! I spit upon this ikon, and then I break it in pieces and throw it down and stamp on it.'

Still the peasants said nothing.

'Now if there were a God, He would strike me down with lightning. I defy him. You see there is no God. He does not kill me . . .'

'No,' answered the peasants, 'but we do!' Whereupon they beat Georg Kozlovsky to death.

The popular belief in the Tsar was completely dissipated by the experience of the four Dumas following the Revolution of 1905. The decay of religion began about the same time, but in 1915, when I was in Russia, its hold was still outwardly very strong; there were still those vast incoherent pilgrimages to the shrines of saints, the city crowds crossing themselves whenever they passed chapel or church, the immense chanting religious processions . . . By the summer of 1917, however, almost nobody crossed himself, the attendance at mass was confined mostly to old women, and religious processions took place at rarer and rarer intervals, amid the growing indifference of the streets. Local revolutionary groups demanded that the inhabitants of monasteries be set some useful work; church lands were confiscated by peasant communities. In January, 1918, the Bolsheviks boldly took possession of the great Alexander Nevsky Lavra, and in the scuffle which followed a priest was shot. The procession of protest which followed in the streets of Petrograd was remarkable for its smallness, and the absence of almost every element except very simple old women . . . More significant still was the Red Burial in the November days, when all the churches and shrines were closed, and no priest officiated. But perhaps most symbolic of all, the bombardment of the Moscow Kremlin, and no voice raised against it but that of artists and archaeologists . . .

Revolution is a great educator, of course, but I ascribe the disappearance of religion among the Russian masses to the substitution of new spiritual forces, such as Socialism, Internationalism, etc., to which hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants

transferred their mortal allegiance; the cloudy vision of a new and happy Russia, a new and happy world, which almost everybody seemed to have. Then there was the civil war itself, wherein every proletarian could see with his own eyes the alliance of religion with the bourgeoisie. Travel, unrestricted liberty of speech, the prodigious flood of printed matter and the spread of reading – all these did their work in shaking the Russian peasant forever out of his pristine simplicity faith.

Dogmatists – and almost everybody who visits Russia and gets to know anything about the country and the people comes home astride of an unshakeable theory – will accuse me of having treated the Russians as a homogeneous people, instead of some fifty-nine races living under every kind of climatic and geographical condition over one-sixth of the earth's surface. Well, from the course and results of the Revolution I am more inclined than ever to support *my* theory – that in spite of all these divergencies the Russians *are* a homogeneous people, bound together by a contagious [*sic*] civilization, and of late by Socialism. At the Constituent Assembly I met a delegate from the frontier of Outer Mongolia, a Russian-speaking Chairman, whose program had the following demands:

The workers shall be represented in the control of industry.

Aid and encouragement shall be extended by the Russian Republic to the left wing of the Socialist movement in other countries.

Primary technical schools shall be established everywhere.

Consider the fact that in both the Provisional Government and the Bolshevik Government there were Gruzinians [i.e. Georgians], Tatars, Jews, Cossacks, Armenians, Letts, Lithuanians, Finns, Ukrainians . . . But more noteworthy than all, remember that what happened in Petrograd was almost exactly duplicated, though with varying intensity and at different intervals of time, in every city of the huge country, Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, Sevastopol, Kharkov, Omsk, Tomsk, Irkutsk, Batum, Vladikavkaz, Nizhni and Great Novgorod, Minsk, Dvinsk, Ekaterinberg, Tiflis, Kazan, Pskov, Samara, Rostov, Vladivostok, Astrakhan, Tashkent, Helsingfors [i.e. Helsinki]; in Finland, Ukraine, Crimea, Caucasus, Siberia, Turkestan, on the borders of Tibet, in the Trans-Caspia and the Trans-Baikal, in lonely valleys of the Ural, among Cossacks of the Don and the Kuban.

But it all did not happen on schedule, and it refused to function according to the precedents laid down by either the French Revolution or the American War of Independence, which are, of course, the most fashionable formulas. There was neither wholesale slaughter of the ruling classes, accompanied by a fierce fervor of patriotism, nor ~~was there blissful~~ enthusiastic acceptance of the blessings of parliamentary government. Instead, the Russian Revolution proceeded to invent new forms, which it followed with the inexorable indifference to good taste characteristic of natural forces. Naturally the *intelligentsia* was outraged – and when, in November, there suddenly was staged the terrifying spectacle of a whole people going its own wild path to its own ends, the *intelligentsia* ~~naturally~~ joined the opposition.

In many ways, indeed, for years the Revolutionary movement was a disappointment to the conventional. In the first place, the peasants didn't respond satisfactorily to propaganda, either of Terrorism or ~~Constitutionalism; as for the industrial workmen, they went too far~~ Talk. When the rising took place in 1905, the world said, 'At last!' and settled back to watch the fireworks. But fireworks were scarce. No Mirabeaus, no Dantons, Marats;³ every time the revolutionists killed a policeman they were filled with remorse. There were mutinies in the Army, in the Black Sea fleet, at Kronstadt, Libau; the peasants in some districts burned landowners' houses. The Duma met, with the world's eyes upon it, and after threatening all sorts of heroic defiance, let itself be ignominiously dissolved; and the whole revolutionary structure fell to the ground before the first strong arm. It was a witty Japanese who expressed the universal disgust; 'An incompetent government is being opposed by an ineffectual revolution.'

Instead of flaring up into a mighty conflagration, as the French Revolution did, the Russian Revolution obeyed its inherent natural push as long as the push lasted, and then subsided – much as in a premature spring the trees put out leaf-buds, which are nipped brown by the first cold spell. There were few melodramatics in the rising of 1905 – and few, too, in the Revolution of 1917, when Spring actually came, at first tentatively, with tempest and wind, and then in a rush of red blossoming. And there were no heroes of the Russian Revolution. Kerensky – the 'pocket-Mirabeau' as someone called him; Tsereteli, Chkheidze, Dan, Liber, Gots – certainly the 'pocket-Girondins'⁴ – these might have been heroes or tragic figures in a more conventional land. But in Russia they were

carelessly tossed aside by the onrushing of the Red Tide. Of course there were big men – Lenin, Trotsky – but they were so apparently big because they expressed the crowd. The crowd was the hero of the Russian Revolution . . .

All through the history of the revolutionary movement one fact is evident, and to me it explains much that is otherwise incomprehensible; nothing fundamental happened until people and times were *ripe* for it. The Terrorist movement of the [18]70s and 80's was a failure. The rising of 1905 was a failure. Years of propaganda seemed to have no more effect on the minds of the masses than rain in a stone-quarry. The Revolution of 1917, by the middle of the summer, was a flat failure. Who forgot the anger and contempt of the Allies, and the Teutonic scorn of Germany, when the July offensive in Galicia broke down in ignominious panic? I remember our sneers at the Bolsheviks those last days of October, when the Kerensky government and bourgeois Russia in general were reviling them, threatening them, laughing at them; when it seemed as if they hadn't strength or energy enough to call the Congress of Soviets; when the leaders sat around drinking tea and saying dubiously, 'The situation is very grave!'

All this time the race-mind of the Russian people was being slowly made up to end war, abolish the bourgeoisie, create a new civilization, accomplish the social revolution – in the most matter-of-fact way. The Soviets met on November 6 because the Russian race-mind was decided; the Bolshevik rising succeeded because times and people were *ripe*. And when they were ripe for organization, for propaganda, try to grasp the colossal machinery that was set in motion. Consider that the Soviets, the Factory Shop Committees, Labor Unions, Land Committees and political parties made a vast luminous network over all populated Russia. Think of the incessant conferences of delegates from every corner of the land, for every conceivable purpose, which met in Petrograd and all the other cities. Think of the wonderful complex new state which rose from the Bolshevik victory. Think of the hundreds of thousands of newspapers, pamphlets, proclamations sent out broadcast from every town; of the railroads carrying ten thousand organizers, agitators, speakers; of the telegraph-wires loaded with news whose every word was a link in the tremendous All-Russian debate about Russia the world and the future.

~~Of course in these days the public opinion of the majority of alien mankind is bitterly against the Russian people. They are traitors~~

At this point I seem to hear the indignant outcry of the reader:

'He speaks as if the whole Russian people were in favor of the Bolshevik insurrection! While the whole world knows that only a small minority seized the power, and maintained it by the force of bayonets! Look at the composition of the Constituent Assembly, in which the Bolsheviks and their allies together occupied less than a third of the seats!'

It was Renan who wrote, '*La Révolution française fut la gageure d'un petit nombre d'énergumènes qui réussirent à faire croire qu'ils avaient entraîné la nation.*'⁵ I maintain that this is true of any revolution, or of any 'popular movement': the active political force is always a fanatical minority, and its success depends upon its ability to galvanize into temporary action the galvanizable proportion of the public, and to convert the immense indifference of most of the population into a sort of benevolent inertia. In times of revolution more people are stirred to action than at any other period. This fact was particularly noticeable in Russia. Dear reader, you only prove my point when you say that the Bolsheviks maintained their power by force of bayonets. *Who were the bayonets?* Russian peasants and workmen in uniform, acting voluntarily, through elected officers and elected committees. As for the Constituent Assembly, the best proof that it did not represent the active masses lies in the fact that it was dispersed without as much protest from them as was called out by the dissolution of the First Duma . . .⁶

Of course in these days the opinion of the majority of that part of mankind which is allowed to express an opinion is bitterly hostile to the revolutionary Russian masses. They are traitors because they did not care any longer to sacrifice their lives and their hopes to the cause of the bourgeoisie of western Europe. They are cowards because they consented to a 'disgraceful' peace with Germany, and some prospect of freedom, to a graceful old age in the Allied work-house. They are immoral because they trust the international working-class more than the capitalists of their own country. They are robbers, not only because they expropriated the property of Russia bourgeois – property which has been bought ten times over by the sweat of the workers – but also because they cancelled the foreign debt contracted by their cruellest oppressor to pay for chains that bound them and guns that butchered them, the mere payment of the interest on which condemned the whole race to eternal peonage. And I have heard Mrs. Pankhurst sneer at them for their cowardly deficiency in the good old Anglo-Saxon virtue of

blood-lust. 'If this had been an *English* revolution,' she said . . .⁷

It is difficult for the bourgeoisie – and especially so for the foreign bourgeoisie – to understand the ideas that move the Russian masses. It is all very easy to say that they have no sense of Patriotism, Duty, Honor; that they do not submit to Discipline, or appreciate the Privileges of Democracy; that in short they are Incapable of Self-Government. But in Russia all these attributes of the bourgeois democratic state have been replaced by a new ideology. There *is* patriotism – but it is allegiance to the international brotherhood of the working-class; there *is* duty, and men die cheerfully for it – but it is duty to the revolutionary cause; there *is* honor, but [it] is a new kind of honor, based on the dignity of human life and happiness rather than on what a fantastic aristocracy of blood [and] of wealth has decreed is fitting for 'gentlemen'; there *is* discipline – revolutionary discipline, as I hope to show in these pages; and the Russian masses are showing themselves not only capable of self-government, but of inventing a whole new form of civilization.

Standing alone, as it does, the only live thing in the universe, there is a strong probability that the Russian Revolution will not be able to defy the deadly enmity of the entire world. But whether it survive or perish, whether it be altered unrecognizably by the pressure of circumstance, it will have shown that dreams can come true, that the race may be to the strong, that the toiling masses can not only conquer, but build. And some day the workers will see . . .

John Reed Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University
(written in Christiania, 18 March 1918)

NOTES

1. Reed revised the typescript of this article. Substantive alterations have been retained.
2. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78), author of *Le contrat social* (1762), argued that men were born free, equal and virtuous in a state of nature, and that the state was based upon a 'social contract' within which individuals formed a social body by mutual consent and for mutual benefit.
3. Mirabeau (1749–91), Danton (1759–94) and Marat (1743–93): French revolutionaries of varying degrees of radicalism. See document 31, note 5.

4. Girondins: moderate republicans in the French Assembly (1791–3), whose leaders were deputies from the Gironde in south-western France.
5. 'The French Revolution was the wager of a small number of zealots who succeeded in putting the idea across that they had the nation behind them.'
6. Reed's article 'The Constituent Assembly in Russia', published on 30 November 1918, appears below, document 28.
7. Like Reed, Sylvia Pankhurst (1882–1928) attended the Second Congress of the Communist International in July and August 1920, where she forcefully argued the need for revolutionaries to remain outside existing social-democratic parties. During one speech she remarked, 'I refer to an expression of Comrade Lenin's, who said, one should not be too extreme. I think, however, one should be even more extreme than one is' – *Second Congress of the Communist International, Minutes of the Proceedings*, Eng. tr. (London, [1977]), II, 179.

II Fragment: 'History of the Rev.'

Was the Revolution of 1905, then, a failure? The Tsardom remained, apparently stronger than ever. Although *legally* Absolutism was no more, although *legally* the Duma was the ruler of the nation – facts made much of by Liberals and Moderate Socialists all over the world – the Russian Autocracy was a very lively corpse, and the Duma, constantly thwarted and silenced, constantly altered by the changing of the electoral laws, was only a paper institution.

True, at times the Duma served as a very convenient rostrum for showing up the Government to the masses of the people, at a time when the press was muzzled and meetings forbidden. But the newspapers were often forbidden to publish the speeches of the most radical members, and an attitude of hostility on the part of the Duma invariably provoked its dissolution and reorganization. And never was it possible to preach revolutionary Socialism there – for, no matter how bitterly they hated the Tsardom, the Duma majority belonged to the class which believes in the sacredness of private property . . .

Even in the comparatively liberal elections to the First Duma, the Socialists boycotted the polls. In the next three elections, which were more and more restricted, the Mensheviks and Socialist

Revolutionaries took part. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, refused to have anything to do with the Duma.¹

Here can be seen the fundamental difference between the Bolsheviks and the Moderate Socialists.

The latter conceived the failure of the Revolution to be due to the division of the revolutionary forces. Following Plekhanov's interpretation of Marxian theory, they held that the Tsardom must be overthrown by the capitalist class before a Social Revolution could come about. Although the capitalists and the proletariat had mutually hostile aims, they were agreed on one point – the necessity of overthrowing Autocracy. Therefore they urged cooperation with the Liberal parties against the Tsardom, the unity of 'all live forces' – a phrase which was to become famous.

The Bolsheviks, on the contrary, had learned that a *purely political* revolution was no longer possible in the world, and that any revolt against Tsardom would inevitably be accompanied by the outbreak of armed class struggle. The 'unity of all live forces' was to them an absurdity. Had they not been seen this 'unity' break down the moment the class struggle came into view?

The Mensheviks proposed a conference of representatives of workingmen from all over Russia, whether Socialist or non-Socialist, to formulate a program.

The Bolsheviks bitterly opposed such a convention. They pointed out that in most highly-developed countries – and especially in Russia – the majority of the workers are not class-conscious, and their minds are poisoned and confused by the press, by the Church, by teachers and leaders. Only events teach the masses – only revolutionary action, demonstrating simply and clearly the line-up of class-interests, could make them revolutionists. A heterogeneous assemblage of workingmen of all tempers and all minds could only result in a reformistic program which would hamper the revolutionary development of the workers, and deliver the movement over to the Liberals.

The Mensheviks wanted *organized working-class power*, whatever the direction. The Bolsheviks insisted that it was the function of the Socialists to find the right way, and stick to it, no matter how few in number, until the day came when the workers, forced by events, would come and ask for guidance.

As for the Socialist Revolutionaries, they still believed that the peasants would overthrow the Tsardom, because the peas[ants const]ituted the vast majority of the Russian people. And [they

continued to follow their traditional line of action – assassination of high Government officials by the Fighting O[rganiz]ations.

Was the Revolution of 1905 a failure? To the Moderate Socialist leaders it was, except for the October manifesto and the Duma. To them it seemed as if the people were disheartened, discouraged, disillusioned, as they themselves were. One method had proved futile; armed insurrection of the working-class alone was inadequate.

To the Bolsheviks, however, it was not so. They had seen the powerful effect of insurrection upon the people – the awakening of ever-widening masses; the growing class-consciousness, the deepening revolutionary aim of the proletariat in action. But more than that; they had actually seen the line-up of classes, the inevitable split between the working class and the capitalists. And they believed that the people, now exhausted, crushed, silent, had been branded deep with the lesson by Revolution, the Great Teacher.

The masses were silent once more. Unlike the disillusioned leaders, the intellectuals, who plunged into mysticism and debauch, the workers had daily tasks to do, machines to run, houses to build, trenches to dig. Earth-born, they returned to the earth for rest and strength, unconsciously assimilating² digesting their experience.

~~Silence over all the land, silence broken only by the hiss of the knout, the crash of rifles of the death squad, the moans of mothers whose sons and daughters crowded the iron barred prison-trains rushing eastward into Siberia. Silence, except for the screams of Jews massacred in the pogroms, and the shouts of Black Hundred mobs . . .~~

Silence over all the land. Silence broken only by the [scream]s of Jews massacred in *pogroms*, the roaring of the [Black Hundred].³ Silence, save for the hiss of the knout, the [crashin]g rifles of the firing-squad, the moans of mothers whose sons [and dau]ghters crowded the prison-trains rushing eastward to Siberia . . .

PART TWO

What makes revolutions? Propaganda? Agitation? No. conditions, [undecipherable]. Similar conditions produce similar results. The Revolution of [1905] had been crushed in blood – but it could not be wholly [block]ed out, unless life itself were utterly destroyed.

The Russian [people] had risen against Tsardom, against Capitalism. Tsardom and [Capital]ism still remained.

1910 – only five years. A new revolutionary generation had [grow]n up. The masses had recuperated. In spite of the continued and [ho]rrible repression, obscure currents [bre]wed below the surface of the vast people, stirring them to action. First came the students' strike against capital punishment; then strikes of workers in the industrial centers, half economic, half political. All the next two years the strikes and disturbances increased. Why? There had been no relaxation of the dreadful reaction that followed 1905. The Duma was powerless reactionary; Labor organizations were still illegal; Socialist propaganda was outlawed . . .

The beginning of 1913 was heralded by a gigantic country-wide demonstration, celebrating the anniversary of Bloody Sunday, 1905. In Petrograd alone fifty-five thousand workers went out. In April there was another, huger manifestation in memory of the martyred dead. The First of May was celebrated as it had not been celebrated since 1905, with great processions of workers marching through the streets of the cities, clashed with police and Cossacks. The Government redoubled its severity, but without effect: the movement continued to grow . . .

But it was a new Russia that witnessed these events. In the intervening years Capitalism had organized and grown powerful. The efforts of Count Witte, whose object it had been to reconcile Autocracy and Capitalism, had not been wholly in vain. The Government had made many concessions to commerce and manufacture. High Finance was represented in the Imperial Council, and the majority of the Duma came from the land-holding and manufacturing classes. At the same time there had been an important growth of the Moderate Liberal element, who were very active in the Municipal governments and the Zemstvos.⁴ The Cadet Party had entirely lost its first fine revolutionary flush; it still stood for constitutional Government, it still opposed the Government – but the Liberals had also learned their lesson from the 1905 Revolution, and wanted no more popular uprisings . . .

~~Indeed, three years later, when for a second time all Russia was united against the Tsardom, Professor Milyukov said, 'If victory (over Germany) can be secured only by means of a Revolution, then we don't want any victory.'~~

~~All through the winter of 1913 and the spring of 1914 the~~

~~revolutionary tide kept rising — strikes, demonstrations, outbreaks here and there. Much vaster was this movement than the one which preceded 1905. The old revolutionary leaders were either dead, or in Siberia, or abroad; but still the masses heaved in swells of elemental storm. The summer of 1914 saw once again barricades on the streets of Petrograd and Moscow. And then, suddenly — the War!~~

2

The sudden declaration of War, and the instant mobilization of Russia's vast man-power, took the workers as much by surprise as it did the better-organized working-class of other countries. It is true that the Social Democrats and the Labor Group in the Duma refused to vote the War Credits on August 8 — but on the other hand, they did not vote *against* them.

Very soon the Moderate Socialists — Mensheviki and Socialist Revolutionaries — reacted to events in exactly the same way as their colleagues in other countries. Kerensky and the Labor Group in the Duma came out strongly in favor of supporting the War '*to defend our native land.*' There followed a long Manifesto, signed by Plekhanov, Deutsch, Avksentiev, and other 'leaders' of various Socialist factions — most of them in exile — appealing to the masses to defeat German militarism, chiefly on the ground that German [militarism would] strengthen Russian autocracy.

[Text missing] the vast machinery of mobilization set going, with the [text missing] best-known 'leaders' in favor of the War, with the [text missing] hatred of the Russian people for the 'Germans' — the most [able] and efficient administrators of the Bureaucracy — protest was almost inaudible. The Bolsheviki, the Mensheviki-Internationalists, the Left Wing of the Socialist Revolutionaries were in a minority, their voices lost . . . A conference of revolutionary internationalists, held at Vyborg on November 17, was surprised by the police drawing up a Manifesto which declared that 'from the view-point of the working class and of the laboring masses of all nations of Russia, the defeat of the monarchy of the Tsar and its armies would be of extremely little consequence . . .' The document went on to call for 'the carrying on on all sides of the propaganda of social revolution among the army and at the theater of war, and that weapons should be directed not against their

brothers, the slaves of other countries, but against the reactionary capitalist Governments'.

This line of thinking of course marked a definite split – the beginning of a deadly hostility, between the groups led by the Bolsheviks and not only the Liberals but also the Moderate Socialists.

As for Russian Capitalism, this was its war. In the tremendous catastrophe, it saw its chance to inaugurate a capitalist, parliamentary Government, with the help of its Allies. Russian Capitalism had a real quarrel with Germany; for half a century – and particularly since 1905 – Germany had economically dominated Russian commerce and manufactures, and by favorable commercial treaties, had made Russia dependent upon her. Moreover, the conquest of Constantinople and the Straits, the acquisition of vast fertile territories in Persia and Asia Minor, would offer an immense field for independent Russian enterprise and trade. No capitalists in the world played for a more splendid prize in the Great War than the Russians. And in their eager support of the Tsar's policies they were in turn backed up by the emotional *intelligentsia*, swept off their feet by patriotism, and by the Moderate Socialists, who clung to their dogma that the political revolution must come first . . .

3

The Liberal bourgeoisie mobilized rapidly. In the Union of Zemstvos and the Union of Municipalities they organized and supported hospitals, recreation-centers, baths; they cared for wounded, furnished relief for refugees, provided drugs, bandages and medical services. Though inexperienced, they soon proved to be better managers than the corrupt and inefficient Bureaucracy, whose incompetence, and even actual treachery, was exposed by the terrific strain of the war; soon they were put in charge of buying army supplies abroad, of collecting raw materials and supervising their manufacture into war-supplies, of planting immense regions and distributing food, or organizing and supplying the services behind the lines.

It was they who created the War Industries Board – something like our Council of National Defense – upon which were also placed representatives of the Workers' organizations.

If the Tsardom had had its heart in the war against Germany, it

could have drawn upon almost inexhaustible human energy to support the effort. But the Tsardom was rotten from the top down. It festered in corrosive plague-spots. Its generals, in the pay of the enemy, betrayed whole army corps; officials of the Ministry of War were found selling military plans to the German General Staff; in the Imperial Palace itself, the Tsarina and the infamous monk, Rasputin, headed a cabal which constantly schemes for an understanding with the Kaiser.⁵

Through the net-work of graft, of treason for gold, shone steadily the *class motive* of the Autocracy. Just as the capitalists supported the War because of their *material class interests* – whatever fine phrases of ‘Liberty’ and ‘Democracy’ fell from their lips; so the Tsardom, at first driven to oppose German political expansion eastward, soon came *instinctively* to know that the victory of the Allies would inevitably lead to its own radical alteration, while in Imperial Germany lay its only friend.

The class interest of the great worker and peasant masses, however, was not involved in either point of view. They were just as indifferent to the conquest of Constantinople as to the perpetuation of the Tsardom. But as yet, caught in the vast military machine, held by the brute emotion of men in war, confused by the appeals and promises of the Moderate Socialist leaders, they were dumb . . . It needed events to awaken them to the truth – events such as had occurred in 1904; and events were on the way.

The conscious effort of the Autocracy to surrender to Germany began to make itself felt during the first year of the War. The disaster of the Masurian Lakes, the discovery of Sukhomlinov’s treachery, the sabotage of provision and munitions-supplies, awakened terrible suspicions. In January, 1915, the Duma met and cautiously expressed its alarm. The Moderate Socialists accused the Government of ‘failure to defend Russia’. In July, the Duma came together again, this time threatening vague but dire things unless the Government more energetically prosecuted the War. Said Milyukov, ‘The people (he meant the bourgeois Liberals) wish to take affairs into their own hands and correct what has been neglected.’ Kerensky ‘appealed to the people to take into their hands the salvation of the country . . .’ He meant, defend Russia from the Germans. Says John Spargo, of this session, ‘*Only the fear that a revolution would make the continuance of the war impossible prevented a revolution at that time.*’⁶

This is true. Only the fear of a *Social Revolution* prevented the Liberals from making a revolution at *any* time. For example, in the fall of 1916, when the Russian armies were tottering from the shock of disaster after disaster, Milyukov, in spite of his passionate advocacy of the War, said publicly, 'If victory can be assured only by means of a revolution, *then we don't want any victory!*'

In August, 1915, the capitalist parties in the Duma formed a coalition, the Progressive Bloc – consisting of the Cadets, Progressives, Nationalists and Octobrists. Thus Capitalism, from radical to reactionary, gathered in one group to oppose, on the one hand the surrender to German capitalism, on the other, the working-class revolutionary movement.

But even then, better the Kaiser than the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Scarcely two years later, we find this same Milyukov, this same Rodzyanko, secretly intriguing with Imperial Germany for help against the Bolsheviki; at any rate, Germany, being a capitalist nation, would not confiscate capitalist property in Russia!⁷

Meanwhile, all classes in Russia except the bureaucrats and the Imperial plunderbund stood against the treachery of the Government. The bankers, the manufacturers, the land-lords and land-owning nobility were united in defense of their class interests against the Tsardom, which was ready to sacrifice everything for its own existence. They looked upon the nations of the West, and saw the capitalist Governments standing firm, and the dominant propertied classes triumphant, powerful and rich. The demand for 'a responsible Government' once more went up from the Russian people.

But the Government defiantly suspended the Duma. The Autocracy was in danger, and it struck at its enemies.

The condition of the soldiers at the Front was by this time appalling. The great retreat from Poland and Galicia had just taken place, forced by the lack of guns and ammunition due to sabotage in the factories and on the transportation-lines. The railroads were demoralized. Although the country was full of provisions, the great cities were starving. Coal, food, munitions were deliberately misrouted, lost, shipped into the mountains and the desert, sold to the enemy. Whole regiments were flung, without arms, to the slaughter.

It was against all efforts to remedy these conditions that the

Government's wrath was directed. Every obstacle was placed in the way of the Union of Zemstvos, the Municipalities, and the Cooperative Societies. Labor-leaders, who were cooperating with the authorities in averting strikes and establishing relief measures for the families of soldiers and workers, were arrested. The Labor Members of the War Industries Board, who performed functions similar to that of Samuel Gompers on the Council of National Defense, were imprisoned on the charge that they were plotting to 'set up a Social Democratic Republic!'

In the face of Russia shocked, defeated, starved, sold, angry, the pro-German *camarilla* around the Tsar flung Rasputin, the degenerate Siberian monk; Manuilov, swindler and proven traitor; old Goremykin, Premier during the years of fearful reaction before the War; Baron Frederichs, the Prussian *junker*, the Emperor's adviser; Myasoedov, ex-policeman and German agent; Pitirim, the Black Hundred priest; Stürmer, Trepov, Protopopov . . .

Embassies were dispatched to treat secretly with Berlin. And meanwhile, to make plausible the surrender to Imperial Germany, the Tsardom and its agents worked systematically to destroy Russia – to produce such conditions that Russia could not choose but make peace.

4

While this was going on, events were teaching the masses. They saw their service in battle rewarded with betrayal, with starvation, with lack of arms – so that they were driven into battle with empty hands, to be slaughtered. They saw the wounded neglected, as in 1904; they saw their most devoted officers cashiered – because they were faithful. Dreadful losses – seven million casualties in three years – staggered them. They knew they were sold in high places. War-weariness forced them to think. Why were they thus driven? What was the War about? Evidently not about freedom, democracy; for always the Government became more tyrannical, more oppressive. It was death to speak of liberty . . . For what then were they fighting? The overthrow of German militarism, as the Moderate Socialists were saying? It was not so bad as their own! Constantinople? What was Constantinople to them?

A profound loathing of the War rose within them – and a

distrust for those Liberals, those Socialists, who, in the name of freedom, were exhorting them always to remain silent, to go on dying.

So with the workers in the cities. It was forbidden to strike, even to speak. Never had tyranny been so severe. Labor organizations were more than ever illegal. If men struck, they were taken from the factories and hurled into the trenches. The cost of living rose and rose. Their cooperatives were closed, the efforts to help their destitute families were hampered by the Government, their very work was sabotaged. In all this the employer, however patriotic, appeared to the proletariat side by side with his political enemy, the Government. He, more than the soldier, distrusted the 'leaders' who continually pleaded with him to work for the salvation of the country, to submit, not to strike. As for the peasants, in spite of the plethora of grain, the sabotaged transportation system produced almost famine conditions . . .

The autumn of 1915 again inaugurated an era of desperate strikes and demonstrations, or peasant outbreaks. These were ruthlessly suppressed by the Government, but they continued just the same. The whole country, from top to bottom, was seething with discontent.

In the fall of 1916 Boris Stürmer, favorite of the Imperial *camarilla*, was appointed Premier. Stürmer materially increased the disorganization of the country, corresponded almost openly with Germany, tightened the censorship and choked the Zemstvos and other social organizations – and, perhaps because the Government wanted a scape-goat to blame for its crimes, summoned the Duma to meet on November 14, 1916.

All observers agree that *if the Duma had not met*, the Revolution would have broken. In fact, the democratic 'leaders' exerted their most powerful persuasion upon the masses, promising that the Duma would do something. This was their role from the first to last – preventing the Revolution.

The Duma finally met them, this time, from top to bottom, one united hostile front against the Government. From Moderate Socialists to Monarchists and Black Hundred leaders like Purishkevich, all factions furiously assaulted the Cabinet of Stürmer and Protopopov. The evidence of graft, of treachery, was so damning and so open against the Government that Stürmer resigned. Protopopov remained, and as Premier the Tsar appointed Trepov, a

reactionary bureaucrat. More and [more] corrupt, more and more openly treacherous became the Dark Forces at the head of things. The Imperial Council, composed of the blackest reactionaries, joined with [manuscript ends]

John Reed Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University
(written in Norway, March 1918)

NOTES

There is no internal evidence to suggest when this article was written. It is similar in approach to other things that Reed wrote while he was in Scandinavia in the spring of 1918, awaiting a visa which would allow him to return to the United States. A quotation from John Spargo (see note 6 below) may suggest a later date. The title was scribbled on the file in which this manuscript was received into the Houghton Library, Harvard University, in a hand other than Reed's.

1. Reed is mistaken on the Bolshevik attitude towards the Duma. Though many Bolshevik leaders (excluding Lenin) originally favoured a boycott of the Duma, the fraction fell into line with the policy of the RSDRP. Eighteen Bolshevik deputies were elected to the Second Duma, four to the Third and six to the Fourth.
2. Substantive revisions have been retained.
3. 'Black Hundreds': see document 11, note 23.
4. Co-ordinating Committees ('Unions') of urban and rural (Zemstvo) local authorities, jointly referred to as 'Zemgor', had played an important part in organizing ancillary support during the Russo-Japanese War, and on the outbreak of the First World War they were allowed to reconvene and granted substantial funds.
5. On the alleged pro-Germanism of the 'Imperial *camarilla*' see document 2, note 2.
6. This quotation, from John Spargo, *Bolshevism: The Enemy of Political and Industrial Democracy* (New York, [1919]) p. 104, is anomalous in a manuscript dated early 1918, though Spargo's comment probably appeared in an (unidentified) earlier article.
7. By May 1918 a minority of the Cadet Party, especially those associated with the Kadet organization in Kiev (then under the German puppet government of Hetman Skoropadsky) favoured seeking German aid against the Bolsheviks. In June 1918 Pavel Milyukov, former Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government, approached General Haase of the German Command in Kiev and proposed 'friendly neutrality' between the Germans and the Volunteer Army under General Denikin. Milyukov had in mind a 'popular monarchy' under Grand Duke Mik-

hail Alexandrovich, but insisted on the restoration of Russian territories lost at Brest-Litovsk. His proposals were rejected by the German Ambassador, Mumm. See George A. Brinkley, *The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia 1917–1921* (Notre Dame, Ind. 1966) pp. 40–5.

15

Bolsheviki Foes of All Imperialism

The effect of Bolshevik propaganda is always the same – against Imperialism. The best proof of this fact is that the first act of the Ukrainian Bolsheviks was to repudiate the treaty secretly concluded between the bourgeois Ukrainian Rada and the German Imperial Government.¹ And the best proof that Germany opposed and opposes the Bolshevik idea is that Imperial Germany attacked the Finnish revolutionists, and is now fighting on the side of the Finnish White Guard and the Ukrainian Rada against both Bolshevik parties, as well as ceaselessly intriguing in Russia proper to destroy the Workmen's and Peasant's Government. If there is any truth in the news of a Russian counter-revolution, it may be directly blamed to German instigation.

No one who has not been in Russia this past year can understand the conditions which forced the inevitable signature of the Russo-German treaty of Peace.² There is much present talk about disorganization in Russia, but the average citizen never realizes the fact that from the days when the Novgorodians sent word to the Varangi princes, 'We have no order, come and rule over us', this disorganization has been characteristic of Russia.³ I make so bold as to state that the Imperial Russian Government was one huge corruption superimposed on hopeless disorganization, and upheld by an army of police. When, in the last half-year of 1916, the German-directed Government of the Tsar deliberately set out to wreck the economic structure of Russia, in order to bring about a disastrous peace with Germany, the work was accomplished beyond all undoing.

At the daybreak of the March Revolution, the Russian transportation system was wrecked to such an extent that it would have taken five years of peace to restore it. The same is true of Russian industry – and most important, of the Russian army and navy.⁴ One characteristic incident of industrial evolution will show what I mean. When the Revolution broke, the workmen of the Arms and

Munitions plant at Sestroretzk – owned by the Government – took over the control of the works, and appointed their own committee to run the business. And, although these were just ordinary untrained workmen, within six months they had reduced hours of labor from eleven to eight, raised wages sixty per-cent, increased production forty-five per cent and cut down expenses about one half!

This wholesale disorganizing of Russia – whose entire condition before the war would have been called disorganization here – was accomplished in the crudest possible way. Railroad rolling stock was allowed to deteriorate, coal for operating was held back, and in some well-authenticated cases even boilers of locomotives were bored full of holes! In industry raw materials and fuel were not delivered, lock-outs and provocatory strikes declared, machinery was sabotaged. The workers were turned out on the streets by thousands to swell the tide of discontent, already rising among the city population whose food supplies were diverted into the wastes of the Urals, and the army masses who were unsupplied with either provisions or munitions. Add to this the fact that defeat was carefully planned on the front, and even carried out . . .

Now most Liberal critics of the Bolsheviks will agree with me so far as to the sins of Tsardom – the whole world knows the record of the Russian Imperial Government in this regard. But few people seem to realize that what was done under the Tsar by pro-Germans to destroy Russian patriotism was continued by the Russian bourgeoisie under Kerensky to destroy the Russian revolution, which had begun, by the end of August, to assume the aspect of an increasing proletarian republican movement.

I must deliberately affirm that the Russian bourgeoisie, the business men, the merchants and manufacturers, as most particularly represented by the Cadet party, employed the same tactics as the Imperial henchmen of Nicholas the Second did. They sabotaged industry, wrecked the railroads still further, disorganized the food supply, and on the front, planned defeat (as for example, the fall of Riga), and made every attempt to destroy the democratic organizations – such as the Army committees, the Soviets, and the Factory Shop Committees. And more or less for the same reasons; for after all is said and done, when it came down to a choice between submitting to a government of the Russian proletariat and a government of Wilhelm the Second, the bourgeoisie chose that government which would guarantee their private profits. This will be no news to any Socialist . . .

Russia, then, was in a state of complete disorganization by the time the Bolsheviks came to power. This disorganization will be much better understood when it is realized that here in America, perhaps the most high-developed capitalistic country in the world, a severe cold spell last winter brought about temporary chaos in the distribution of fuel and other necessities; while in Russia, with a climate twice as severe and six feet of snow on the ground, with food almost impossible to get, the transportation system wrecked, and the country in a state of civil war, there was always enough to eat in Petrograd, and, until the very last, enough coal to run industry and to keep the masses of the people warm – although the coal mines were a thousand miles from the capital and were only one-fifth operative.

As a matter of fact the Bolsheviks were the only group of people in Russia by the fall of 1917 who had any organizing and administrative ability, or any plans for a civilized state. The scheme of the Bolshevik state, as I hope to show in several articles later on, is one of the grandest and most progressive plans of human organization ever imagined. They assumed the State power, then, when Russia was defeated and ruined, when the soldiers threatened to go home *en masse*, twelve millions of them, if peace were not made *on any terms* by November 1. The Bolsheviks persuaded the troops to remain in the trenches, to keep the front firm until they had proposed peace to all the nations. They sent armies of five thousand sailors apiece out through the country to get food and ship it to the starving provinces; they dispatched train-loads of cloth and farming implements to Siberia to be exchanged for bread. And at the same time, it must never be forgotten that the *regiments which fought the Germans back in the trenches and the only ships which resisted them at sea were the Bolshevik regiments and ships!*

The Allies of course refused to respond to the Russian peace terms. The Germans pretended to accept, and negotiations began at Brest-Litovsk; but the Bolshevik leaders were not fooled by German pretence. The best proof of this is that they flooded the German trenches with revolutionary propaganda to such a prodigious extent that the German peace delegation protested against it every day or so. What with this, and with fraternizing, the German eastern front was actually disintegrating. Deserters came over by the thousand; whole companies revolted, and went into camp behind the German lines, refusing to obey their officers. When the German Imperial Government finally ordered the advance into

Russia, it must be realized that the greater part of that invading column was made up of *volunteers from other fronts*, who had been kept in absolute ignorance of Russian affairs.

Among the Bolsheviks themselves there were two main divergent currents of opinion about the peace. One of these, led by Lenin, wanted to accept immediately the first German terms of peace, so as to give the Bolshevik government a chance to organize the country and establish a proletarian state, whose influence would then, ten times stronger, reach out across the frontiers and win back by way of revolution the freedom which Russians desired. Trotsky's party, on the other hand, wanted to try to bring about international social revolution in order to settle the war and every other question together. Revolution in Germany was primarily the object, of course, but there was also to be desired revolutionary pressure by the masses of the Allies on their governments, to force them to agree to a peace conference on the Russian terms of 'no annexations, no indemnities, and the right of self-definition of nations'.

It was for this reason that the Bolsheviks insisted that the negotiations should be public, and it was for this reason that Trotsky at Brest, and all the Bolshevik organs at Petrograd, carried on their program of denunciation against imperialism and capitalism, all the world over. It was for this reason that the secret treaties were published . . .

Trotsky had not only to drag along the negotiations as long as he could – to play for time – in order to convince the German people, but also to allow the Finnish and the Ukrainian Bolsheviks to overthrow their respective bourgeois governments, which were naturally trying with all their might to strengthen themselves by separate alliances with Germany.

As far as the Finnish and Ukrainian revolutions are concerned, Trotsky calculated to within twenty-four hours of their occurrence. For Germany, he also calculated to a nicety, but neither Trotsky nor any other human being could calculate the extent of the movement there. As it is, the great German strikes showed, for all [manuscript ends; conclusion from the text published in the *Call*, 2 May 1918, p. 2]

the bitter disappointment they brought, that the German masses understood and understand what Russia has done. And that, after all, was probably Trotsky's greatest contribution to the situation.

The breaking off of peace negotiations and the German advance, with the utter collapse of any effective Russian resistance, brought down on Trotsky's head a fierce rebuke from Lenin, who considered the whole affair a gigantic failure. From one point of view, probably, Lenin's idea would have been best for Russia, if not for the actual material war situation all around. But Trotsky, in spite of the wave of disappointment which is now sweeping over the world, has planted in the minds of great masses of people all over the world ideas which, working now obscurely, will inevitably come to flower in the settlement of peace.

John Reed Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University
(published in the *New York Call*, 2 May 1918)

NOTES

This text follows the manuscript in the John Reed Papers, Houghton Library, as far as it goes. The published text in the *Call* imposed newspaper style upon Reed's article, shortening his paragraphs and altering his punctuation, but making no substantive alterations.

1. The Ukrainian Central Rada, formed by progressives and liberals in Kiev on 17 March 1917 proclaimed the autonomy of the Ukraine within a reformed Russia on 23 June. On 17 July the Provisional government recognized the autonomy of the Ukraine pending the convening of the Constituent Assembly, and together with the Rada formed a General Secretariat. The Rada declared the Ukraine to be independent on 22 January 1918, and on 9 February it signed a separate peace with the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk. Thereafter, the Rada enlisted German help against the Bolsheviks, but it was dissolved by German troops on 28 April 1918. The following day the Ukrainian League of Landowners proclaimed General Pavlo Skoropadsky Hetman of the Ukraine. See Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954).
2. An armistice was signed by Russia and Germany at Brest-Litovsk on 15 December 1917. The 'Treaty of Peace between Russia and Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey' was signed at Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918. On the negotiations with Germany and the disagreements within the Bolshevik leadership, see J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Brest-Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace. March 1918* (London, 1966 edn).
3. Reed here refers to the legendary 'calling in' of Riurik and his Norman 'Varangian' warriors, an event dated 862 in the Russian Primary Chronicle of the fourteenth century. Allegedly, Riurik settled in Novgorod and in 882 his successor Oleg captured Kiev and founded the

Kievan federation of princes. On the basis of this legend, German scholars in the eighteenth century claimed that the first Russian state had been founded by a 'Germanic' people, implying the cultural superiority of the Germans over the Slavs. This 'Normanist' theory of the founding of Kievan Rus has since been largely discredited.

4. Reed used this argument in his New Star Casino lecture later in May 1918 (see document 16).

16

A Lecture on Conditions in Russia

'The only thing that can save Russia is the recognition of the Soviet government by the United States and the stopping of the invasion of friendly "troops"', John Reed, who recently came from that country, told an audience of 5,000 people, in the New Star Casino, 107th Street and Park Avenue.

The meeting adopted a resolution which will be sent to President Wilson and the State Department asking, on behalf of free Russia, that the United States save it from ruin.

The New Star Casino was jammed to the doors, people standing in the aisles and on the window sills.

Heckling continued all through the talk and on a number of occasions the hall was in an uproar. But Reed told the audience that he was not afraid to face such a large and stormy gathering.

'I addressed the Third National Russian Congress,' Reed said, 'and I am here to tell the tale.'

The intrigues of the capitalists in Russia were vividly pictured by the correspondent. In an hour and a half talk he portrayed conditions in Russia as they are and not as they are believed to be.

He told them that there is no such thing as people starving in Russia.

'Here in the United States, far away from the war zone, with no internal struggles, with a full and complete and so called efficient capitalist system, you have had to suspend all industries for five days last winter,' Reed said. 'But in Petrograd in the midst of a revolution, the country practically demoralized and the Kerensky forces having destroyed three-fifths of the mines before they lost their power, the industries were not suspended even one day.'

'The Russians have not yet begun to fight,' Reed told his audience when he touched on the stories circulated in this country that the Bolsheviki have surrendered to the Germans.

'The Soviet government is not a democracy,' continued Reed. 'It's a dictatorship of the proletariat by the force of arms, to protect

the rights of the Soviets. And who are the Soviets? Why, the people.'

The speaker explained the working of the factory shop committees, who are in charge of Russian industries and conducting them with as little waste as possible in order to give every Russian worker a chance to make a decent living under tolerable and humane conditions.

He told of the organization of the economic Soviet which is in charge of all important industrial undertakings, such as building railroads or any other big matters.

The committee is composed of the best engineers, chemists and other professionals in the country, and deals with every subject from the point of view of benefitting the country.

Reed pictured the courts of Russia.

'There are no solemn robed judges now,' he said, 'and no lawyers at the bar. The entire audience can take part in any trial and decisions are handed down by a popular vote. The judges are made up of a committee of seven, three members being soldiers and four workingmen. The sentence, if there is any, must be voted by the people present in the court. Such is the system of justice in barbarous and disloyal Russia.'

He then went on to tell of the many German and Austrian prisoners who have become citizens of the republic in eastern Europe. The speaker said that the cracking of Austria, which we, in this country are hearing so much about in the last two or three weeks, was not caused by national disputes, but by the propaganda the Bolsheviki have spread throughout the dual monarchy.

The resolution adopted at this meeting, which will be sent to Washington, reads:

Five thousand people assembled in the New Star Casino, New York city, at a meeting on the evening of May 23, for the purpose of hearing John Reed tell about Soviet Russia, respectfully demand that you bring your influence to bear upon the government of the United States to recognize the Soviet government of Russia and to halt all intervention in Siberia.

We demand this on the ground that the Russian Soviet republic is a government, really of, by and for the people and so for ever opposed to autocracy wherever it is found and at the present moment waging relentless war for the democratic aims announced by the allies.

The meeting was arranged by the Harlem Educational Center. Abe Tuvim, organizer of the Center, was chairman of the meeting. Art Young, one of the indicted *Masses'* editors, also spoke. A collection was taken up which will be equally divided between the Educational Center and *The Liberator*.

New York Call, 25 May 1918

17

A Message to Our Readers from John Reed Who Has Just Returned from Petrograd

Russia under the Workmen's and Peasants' Government is not at all what the bourgeois reporters and diplomats and business men have made America believe.

The world, fed with lies by the capitalistic press, conceives the proletarian republic as an inchoate jumble of disorganization and tyranny, where anarchists, drunken soldiers and German agents dance a destructive bacchanal.

No. As for the disorganization, that was accomplished under Nicholas the Second – who, as everybody then knew, wrecked the Russian army and the Russian system of transportation in order to bring about a separate peace with Germany; it was intensified by the bourgeois element in the Coalition Government of Kerensky, in order to wreck the Revolution . . . The Bolsheviks inherited a ruined Russia, whose soldiers were deserting in millions, whose transportation system was in a state of dissolution – a Russia starving and exhausted. At the time of the peace treaty with Germany, Russia was not so disorganized as it had been the last two months of the Kerensky regime. There was more food in the cities, better order in the streets, and a quickening of Russian life such as had never before occurred in her history . . . Kerensky had merely perpetuated, under the slightly-changed conditions of capitalism, the institutions of Tsardom; under the Bolshevik regime there sprang up an entirely new conception of the state – new political forms (the Soviets); new industrial organization (The Factory Shop Committees); a new educational system, from top to bottom; a new kind of national army and navy; a new agrarian scheme, and a tremendous and myriad-formed outburst of

popular expression, in thousands of newspapers, books, pamphlets, in ceremonies and songs, in the theater – rich, happy and free . . .

The ‘tyranny’ of the Bolsheviks exists largely in the minds of interested persons who rarely if ever object to the violation of the rights of free speech and free assembly in other parts of the world. Yes, newspapers were suppressed in Russia, people were put in jail, Bolshevik commissars made illegal searches and requisitions. But it will surprise Americans to learn that *almost nobody in Russia was or is in jail because of his opinions.*

The greater number of suppressions of newspapers resulted from their violation of the Bolshevik law making advertisements a Government monopoly; other papers were shut down for printing, in time of civil strife, lies (such as the widely-heralded rape of the Women’s Regiment in the Winter Palace), which incited frantic people to bloodshed on the streets, and still others, with a small bourgeois constituency and a large endowment, were put out of business because the newspapers of the proletarian parties, with their enormous public, needed the paper and the printing shops . . .

As for the arrests, only those persons who were proved to be involved in plots of armed counter-revolution, those who were caught grafting, those who were responsible for the dissemination of lies, and the most active members of the old Provisional Government, were imprisoned . . . Most of the officials of the Cadet Party, for example, which was declared ‘enemy of the people’, are still at large. The ‘middle’ and ‘right’ Socialist leaders, Liber, Dan, Gots, Tsereteli, Skobelev and Chernov, whose opposition to the Bolsheviks went to the bitterest ends, are still (or were when I last heard from Russia) at liberty to write, plot and make speeches to huge audiences denouncing the Bolsheviks to their hearts’ content . . . Breshkovskaya is not arrested, Plekhanov is not arrested, Chaikovsky – he who rose in the Railway Workers’ Convention in January and announced that the old-time Terrorist tactics against the Bolsheviks would be resorted to – is not arrested.

The stories about bloodshed are of course ridiculously false.

In the November days, ten Bolsheviks were killed in the attack on the Winter Palace, and *not one* of the defenders – who were simply disarmed and allowed to go home. In the various struggles of the next week, perhaps twenty *junkers* lost their lives. In the

fighting against Kerensky, hundreds of Red Guards were killed and an insignificant number of Cossacks. In Moscow, where the fighting was bitterest, of the eight hundred that died, about five hundred and fifty were Bolsheviks. The attack on the peaceful demonstrations for the Constituent Assembly, in which several people were shot by Red Guards, aroused such a protest among the Petrograd workers that its effect was felt seriously in the elections to the Petrograd Soviet. And when a band of irresponsible madmen killed Shingarev and Kokoshkin in prison, Lenin himself had them remorselessly hunted down and punished, with the full approval of the revolutionary masses.¹

One characteristic incident I remember. The bourgeois newspaper *Rech* one morning charged that certain Red Guards, instructed to take charge of its printing office by the Soviet government, had mistreated the editorial staff and stolen money from the office. The Guards involved promptly came out with a public proclamation denying the charge and invited the accusers to prove it before a jury composed equally of partisans of the two sides, and in case of guilt being proven, offered themselves as voluntary prisoners.

In that time of violent crisis, minds reacted abnormally to events. People of the maturest judgment, who would never have accepted a fact without proof in ordinary times, believed the wildest rumors on no foundation.

I remember that on the morning after the taking of the Winter Palace – at which I had been present, entering with the first troops – I was called on by a young Russian of important family, who had been private secretary to Milyukov and to Tereshchenko.

‘Did you hear about the taking of the Winter Palace?’ he began.

‘The Bolsheviks were led by German officers,’ he narrated solemnly. I said I was astonished, and asked him what uniforms they had worn.

‘Oh, German uniforms, of course.’

‘Were there any German soldiers there too?’

‘Yes, about a hundred, all in uniform, too. And all the commands were given in German!’

In Moscow, where I went immediately after the battle there, I was told *on the way from the station* that the Kremlin was entirely destroyed . . . And when I reached the Kremlin, five blocks away, there was almost no damage visible whatever!

Of course, with such rumors prevalent in Russia itself, how was

America to know what was false and what true? How was America to realize that the Russian masses had set up a new and splendid framework of civilization, when few foreigners even took the trouble to find out that such a thing existed?

But there is another and simpler reason for the travelers' tales which have come out of Russia these last six months. The entire basis of society was reversed. In Petrograd, for example, people who lived in hotels could not get enough to eat, enough heat or enough light, service was bad and servants insolent; there were few cabs to drive about in, and on the railway trams a first-class ticket was no guarantee that one's compartment would not be invaded by a score of unwashed, ticketless soldiers who disliked the *bourzhoui* . . . Everything was fearfully expensive.

But the workers in the factories, the soldiers in the barracks, the peasants in the villages got enough to eat, enough heat and light – pretty short rations, it is true, but still as much as Russians have been getting ever since the Tsar in his infinite wisdom tried to starve Russia into peace in 1916 . . . And the two-course dinner which the bourgeois traveler had to pay sixty roubles for in the Hotel d'Europe, I could get for two and a half roubles in the great communal dining hall of Smolny Institute.

This Bolshevik state – it is hard for us to understand, for it is no bourgeois parliamentary democracy, in which theoretically every man has a vote, and practically a small capitalist group rules; it is a dictatorship of the proletariat, of the unskilled, propertyless masses of the people, for the purpose of forcibly and permanently wrenching from the hands of the property-owning class the weapons of its dominance. In its resistance to this process, the Russian bourgeoisie has shown itself ready to join the Kaiser himself.

It has taught me three things:

That in the last analysis the property-owning class is loyal only to its property.

That the property-owning class will never readily compromise with the working-class.

That the masses of the workers are capable not only of great dreams, but that they have in them the power to make dreams come true.

NOTE

1. Following attempts by deputies elected to the Constituent Assembly to open its proceedings on the date fixed by the Provisional Government, the Sovnarkom on 11 December 1917 declared the Cadet Party to be an 'enemy of the people' and four of its leaders were arrested and imprisoned in the Peter and Paul Fortress. The former Duma deputies and members of the Provisional Government Andrei Shingarev (see Biographical Notes) and Fedor Fedorovich Kokoshkin (1871–1918) were later transferred to hospital, where they were murdered by soldiers on 20 January 1918.

18

'Foreign Affairs'

No. 6 *Dvortsovaya Ploshchad*, facing the Winter Palace, once the private entrance of His Imperial Majesty's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, doubtless Sazonov and Baron Stürmer used to enter by this door, where a placard now reads:

All employees and functionaries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are invited to return to work immediately. Those who refuse to obey will be dismissed and their pension forfeited.

LEON TROTSKY,

People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs.

Seal of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviets of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies.

As you enter the old-time *shveitzars* in their formal blue uniforms with brass buttons and red collars, are there to take your coat, hat and rubbers; which they do with the same obsequiousness as erstwhile to Princes, Grand Dukes and Ambassadors. Now the visitors are for the most part common soldiers and workmen, who address the *shveitzars* as '*tovarishchi* – comrades', and seem quite at home.

God knows what must be stirring in the *shveitzar's* minds! Ten months ago the rule of the Little Father must have seemed eternal. Then came the Kerensky government. Things did not change much; there was a new Minister but the staff remained more or less intact. As one *shveitzar* told me, the new ones were also gentlemen . . . And now the great upset, and a herd of uncouth, shockingly informal persons of the lower classes, who paw over the archives with shouts of sacrilegious mirth.

There was one old *shveitzar* who had served his Emperor and his country in that place for thirty-eight years, having been appointed in the good old days at the request of Prince Golytsin . . . He said, 'Thirteen years ago I stood at this door and watched the soldiers shoot down the people of Gapon in the snow.'¹ Now I take off the

galoshes of the people of Gapon . . . ' Another complained that automobiles did not fit those who ride in them nowadays . . . The *shveitzars* must sell pamphlets containing the Secret Documents to the passing public – a function which they perform reluctantly. As a rule *shveitzars* appear to have no political opinions . . .

Upstairs the dingy corridors are peopled with lounging red-collared couriers, whose duty it was – and is – to run errands for the heads of departments. The beaten path is now between Palace Square and Smolny Institute, the seat of power; and couriers' business is with the proletariat which somehow must be obeyed . . . The reasons for the new state of things are not very clear to the couriers, but they are practical men with families, and jobs are few. Some of them are enterprising fellows, and in the hall upstairs have rigged up a table for the selling of revolutionary literature – just as they do in Smolny: pamphlets by Lenin, Trotsky, a life of Bebel,² a treatise by Spiridonova, *War and the Peasant Proletariat*, and *Songs of the Revolution*. One is ambitious and calls everybody 'comrades'.

When the Bolsheviks seized the power, the administrative and clerical force of all the ministries went on strike. Now the *chinovniks* are crawling back. One meets them from time to time – dapper youths wearing immaculate frock-coats and a dazed expression. An unheard-of outrage of the new regime is the requirement that *chinovniks* must actually work . . . You can conceive the situation by imagining such an innovation among government clerks at Washington.

In the ante-room of the Minister's cabinet is a variegated crowd of Secretaries of Embassy, foreigners trying to hurry up their passports, a consul or so. If you have a Socialist red card, present it to the nervous *shveitzar* at the door, who doesn't know who ought to enter and who not; you will be immediately given precedence. Within is Comrade Zalkind, a slight, quick man with an Italian face his grey hair much rumped, dressed in an old drab half-military coat, and boots. He is Trotsky's delegate in charge of the details of the Ministry – a former political exile, holder of university degrees, speaking four languages, always smiling and very revolutionary.

Across the table from him sits *Tovarishch* Markin, his executive a stern-faced, taciturn sailor.³ In the background a couple of soldiers lounge, pouring tea from a battered samovar. Those naked hooks on the wall once held portraits of Imperial Ministers. By some freak Gorchakov still hangs there, orders on his breast and jewelled

cross at his throat.⁴ Underneath is pinned a cheap print of the face of Bebel, and on the opposite wall Karl Marx glares down from a postcard. Over Zalkind's desk is a pretentious engraving of a painting of the world's diplomats seated round a table, at the Congress of Pekin.⁵ An impious hand has pasted on the frame the legend, '*Banda Kontrabandistov*', Crew of Smugglers.

On the same floor to the right is the department of War Prisoners, very active just now. Comrade Doctor of Philosophy Ment-sikovsky, Commissar of the Bureau, is assailed by a horde of delegates from the prisoners' organizations. Upstairs functions disjointedly the Bureau of the Press, with an army of translators, under the erratic direction of Comrade Radek, of Austria and other places – a violent young Jew. Next door is the newly founded Department of International Propaganda, presided over by Boris Reinstein, American citizen and incorrigible mainstay of the Socialist Labor Party of the United States – an excessively mild-mannered little man who burns with a steady revolutionary ardor. Under him are formed committees of the various peoples – German, Hungarian, Rumanian, South-Slavic, English-speaking – engaged in propagating the ideas of the Russian Revolution abroad.

Between them these various departments manage to publish newspapers in three languages – German (*Die Fackel*, afterwards, called *Völkerfriede*); Hungarian (*Nemzetközi Szocialista*); and Rumanian (*Inainte*). These papers are distributed along the enemy fronts, and to the war-prisoners who speak the various languages. Besides all this, the secret documents, the decrees of the Council of People's Commissars, and the pamphlets of Lenin and Trotsky are being translated, the articles written explaining the policies and achievements of Bolshevism, which are also thrown into various languages and published . . . Every week the 'diplomatic couriers' of the People's Commissars leave Smolny for the capitals of Europe, with trunk-loads of this material, bent on stirring up revolution.

Things are done, but why or how they are done is beyond me. The different departments are organized in the most slipshod manner, overlapping in many places, more or less ignorant of each other's activities, hampered by the saboteurs of the old regime, and crippled by the inherent Russian-penchant for tea and discussion. Hundreds of people writing laboriously hundreds of documents by hand, which documents are thereupon carefully placed where nobody could possibly find them. The ancient and

respectable ghost of the Bureaucracy still haunts the Foreign Office . . .

Late in the afternoon the vague sound of chorus singing once lured me down the fourth floor corridor, beyond the last bureau, to a landing on the back stairs, where I could look through glass doors into a rich little chapel. Two wide priests were bowing and gesturing before the altar, clad in gorgeous vestments of blue brocade, stiff with silver thread. Before a score of ikons framed in jewelled gold and silver, little tapers sent thin flames straight up in the incense-heavy air. On the right wall was an elaborate memorial portrait of some dead-and-gone Excellency – perhaps a former Imperial Minister of Foreign Affairs, certainly a monarchist and a *bourzhoui* – with a tiny swinging lamp burning in front of him.

It was a dark day, and the only light was the warm golden glow of many candles. The sweet soprano responses to the priest's mellow bass came from an obscure corner beyond these, and for a long time I couldn't make out the choir. I crept forward, and all of a sudden I saw a collection of those devilish small boys who run errands around the building, steal cigarette butts out of the cuspidors, appropriate pencils from desks, and use bad language . . . There they were, faces turned to heaven with a seraphic expression, crossing themselves frequently . . .

The only worshippers were four or five dignified old *shveitzar* and couriers, and three scrub women; instead of high-born Excellencies. Perhaps nowhere was change more evident than in this corner of the old Russian world, forgotten there by the busy proletarians next door.

* * *

Two months ago, at No. 6 *Dvortsova Ploshchad*, I saw the new world born.

In a graceful white-and-gold room, floor littered with papers, documents stacked in corners, untidy desks with typewriters long abandoned there, twelve delegates of the German and Austrian war-prisoners came together on their own initiative, to plot revolution. There were three Hungarians – one a noble – two Croatians, two Poles, a Bohemian, a Ruthenian, and three *Reichs-Deutscher*; all International Socialists.

Seven were 'intellectuals', and the other five proletarians – farmers and industrial workers. The ministry was represented by a

Russian workingman. It was interesting to note the difference between the Russian and these five; he was thoroughly at ease in that aristocratic room, and in his position – while the five war prisoners entered timidly, abashed and stood bowing respectfully to the company, shifting their big feet on the once-polished floor. Nor did they sit down until invited, and then stared solidly at the various speakers, without the faintest expression of comprehension or enthusiasm.

It was a strange-looking gathering, two of the delegates in well-tailored suits and fur coats, and all the rest in remnants of faded blue uniforms pieced out with rough odds and ends of Russian clothing. Originally few could understand each other's language, but thanks to their three years' residence here almost all now understood Russian. As I listened, there came to my mind the Grecianizing of the Roman world before the Christian era . . .

One of the Hungarians began to speak, sitting in his chair and looking at the ground in front of him – a young man with a delicate, aristocratic head and nose, and the mouth of a poet. He spoke very quietly, simply.

'In this time when the Russian workers and soldiers are giving their lives to make the whole world of workers free,' he said, 'we foreign Socialists cannot sit quietly by and let them fight alone . . . We have had enough of war, that is true. But there are crises when no man no matter how tired he is, can refuse to fight . . . The peace terms of the Council of People's Commissars are the peace terms for which all lovers of freedom can honorably die . . . If the governments of the Central Powers – if our Fatherlands – refuse to make peace with Russia on those terms, then we must fight our own peoples . . .'

Upon this there was debate, one of the Germans declaring that he could not take arms against his Fatherland, and a wizened Pole pedantically expressing the opinion that war was wrong under any conditions. Another German said he would not fight his countrymen, but he would go around the prison camps and preach the Socialist propaganda. The Hungarian noble reported that ten thousand prisoners in the Moscow district had met and passed resolutions endorsing the Bolsheviki peace terms, and formed a strong Socialist organization on Internationalist lines . . . The five proletarians, being urged to speak, merely grumbled something shamefacedly and were silent.

A declaration was then read, which pledged the delegates to

fight for the Bolshevik peace-terms, if necessary against their own countrymen, and if the peace terms were rejected, to issue an appeal to the German and Austrian soldiers and workers, urging them to throw down their arms, to strike in the munitions factories, to cripple the war. On the vote only two men refused to endorse the declaration – the Pole and the second German. The first German had slipped away, to spread the alarm. It seems he was an officer and a Prussian.

Only then did the five proletarians open their mouths. They said that the news of this movement had already leaked out, and that the officer prisoners were going about threatening the soldier prisoners with dire punishment at home if they had anything to do with the affair . . . The fear of officers was evidently deeply grounded into those five simple soldiers. The Russian said thoughtfully, 'Yes, comrades, we in Russian also used to be afraid of our officers. You'd better get rid of yours like we did ours.'

But the great thing was that the five soldiers had come, and now they would keep on coming. One said, 'I understand. We will make revolution in Germany, and then there will be no more officers and no more punishment, but only our own country . . .' Through the dark window I saw the round winter moon swing slowly up the great sky. The eleven men shook hands and smiled . . .

* * *

Trotsky himself rarely comes to the Foreign Offices, preferring the democratic clangor of Smolny Institute to the respectful quietude of Palace Square. On the top floor of that one-time seminary for aristocratic young ladies, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs has two bare rooms, one where he and his wife sleep on rude cots, the other for an office. There he sits ten or twelve hours a day laboriously writing out by hand every document, and flying into fits of nervous rage.

The door of Trotsky's office is unimpressive, bearing only a placard on which the number 67 is crudely scrawled in red ink, and underneath an enamelled plaque, reminder of other times, which reads 'Ladies Class' . . . Two Red Guards with bayoneted rifles sit on chairs on either side. Upon them beats a perfect typhoon of diplomatic representatives, army delegates, messengers, couriers, the curious. And also every cog in the fitful unwieldy machinery of

Smolny who has a question to ask. 'Trotsky knows,' they say – 'you'd better ask Trotsky.' . . .

Trotsky was at Brest-Litovsk with the peace delegation when he got news that the Rumanian authorities had arrested some Austrians on fraternizing bent and disarmed a whole division of Russian Bolshevik troops on the southwest front. He immediately telegraphed Smolny to arrest the Rumanian ambassador! Such a furor in Europe! The next day the entire diplomatic corps in Petrograd – some say nineteen plenipotentiaries, some thirty-nine – marched solemnly up to Smolny and protested, demanding the release of their Rumanian colleague. The Red Guards and soldiers on duty, and even Lenin, it is said, believed that the nations of the world were sending their representatives en masse to recognize the Soviet government. As for Lenin himself, he was in high good humor. The diplomatic corps of Petrograd calling upon him! His Excellency of Rumania was released – and that same night an order was issued to arrest the King of Rumania, entitled to no diplomatic privileges!

Not the least irony of the situation is that the present People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Republic is that same Leon Trotsky who was exiled from Russia, arrested in Germany, deported from France, kicked out of Spain, imprisoned by the British in Halifax, and jailed for a German spy by the Russian Revolutionary Government. He is the son of a rich Moscow merchant named Bronstein, but it is characteristic of his uncompromising revolutionary integrity that he refused to accept money from his family to return to Russia in revolution, and would only come when the workers of France, Russia and America contributed their hard-earned pennies to buy his ticket.⁶

To look at he is slight, of middle height, always striding somewhere. Above his high forehead is a shock of wavy black hair, his eyes behind thick glasses are dark and almost violent, and his mouth wears a perpetual sardonic expression, although I have seen him smile very gaily. His whole face narrows down to a pointed chin, accentuated by a sharp black beard; and when he stands at the tribune of the Petrograd Soviet hissing defiance to the Imperialists of the world, he gives one the impression of a snake . . .⁷

It has remained for Trotsky, true type of the revolution for which he is largely responsible, to deal a mortal blow to the business of

international diplomacy, and to raise the class struggle to the plane of world politics.

The Liberator, June 1918

NOTES

1. On 9 January 1905 a demonstration organized by the priest George Gapon and the Assembly of Russian Working Men was fired upon in Palace Square, St Petersburg. Over 130 demonstrators were killed. The events of 'Bloody Sunday' marked the beginning of the partial 'revolution' of 1905.
2. Ferdinand August Bebel (1840–1913), German socialist, founder of the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) in 1869.
3. Nikolai Grigorievich Markin (1893–1918), revolutionary sailor, member of the Petrograd Soviet in 1917. Served as secretary and then controller of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs under Trotsky, who greatly admired Markin's energy and courage.
4. Prince Alexander Mikhailovich Gorchakov (1793–1883), the outstanding Russian diplomat of Alexander II's reign.
5. Congress of Peking: in 1901, in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion in China, the major imperialist powers (including Russia) negotiated a treaty which punished the Boxer leaders and lavishly indemnified the powers for their financial losses.
6. Trotsky's father, David Bronstein, was a prosperous farmer of the Kherson province in the Ukraine, not 'a rich Moscow merchant'. He was in Geneva when news came of the rebellion of 1905, and he returned to Russia on a false passport. In 1917 he left New York two weeks after the first news of 'bread riots' in Petrograd. See his *My Life: An Attempt at an Autobiography* (Harmondsworth, Middx, 1975) pp. 171–4, 285–8.
7. Louise Bryant, too, noted the 'serpent-like' aspects of Trotsky: *Six Red Months in Russia* (London, n.d.) p. 58. In *Ten Days*, p. 71, Reed wrote of Trotsky, 'His thin, pointed face was positively Mephistophelian in its expression of malicious irony.'

19

Revolutionary Controversies

I Norman Hapgood and Socialist Journalism

We have received the following letter from Norman Hapgood which gives us a good deal of pleasure and not very much pain.

New York, May 29, 1918

To the editor of *The Liberator*:

Before asking you a question I wish to state my general position on matters involved.

1. I am entirely opposed to the second trial of the editors of the *Masses*, as I think the charge of conspiracy is ridiculous, nor do I believe that these men form an appreciable difficulty in our war-effort.

2. I have frequently expressed the desire to have the entente give the Bolsheviki such friendly help as is possible.

Therefore it is without prejudice that I express regret that most party socialists in America are so unintelligent. We have no great liberal paper like the *Manchester Guardian*, but also we have no socialist paper with weighty judgment like *l'Humanité* or *Vorwaerts*. In your June issue John Reed says that the Kerensky government intensified the disorganization of Russia 'in order to wreck the revolution'. Such childish nonsense could not be found in any of the European organs I have mentioned. Why is it?

Norman Hapgood

We have always ourselves bewailed the fact that party Socialists in America are so unintelligent. The party always seemed to us a little like a country church, and we always said so, especially when we were talking to the party. But it never occurred to us to include

ourselves among the unintelligent ones until this letter came. We thought the very fact that we called most of the party unintelligent proved that we were exceptions, and that our brains were working with extraordinary freedom and brilliancy. Of course it doesn't prove that at all – it only suggests that our unintelligence is of a different kind. I should say that ours is young and injudicial, whereas that of the party as a whole is old and dogmatic. Between us we are botching the opportunity to create a great wise watchful Socialist journal in this country at the hour of need. There is no doubt about that.

On the particular point in question, however, I think it is fair to quote the whole of John Reed's statement:

The disorganization 'was intensified *by the bourgeois element* in the coalition government of Kerensky, in order to wreck the Revolution . . .'

John Reed is away making speeches, and I can not give his defense of this statement. I know that these elements intensified the disorganization *after* the Kerensky Government in order to wreck the *Bolshevik revolution*, and as that revolution was little more than the taking over of formal power by the Soviets, who were in material power before. I do not find it 'childish nonsense', on its face, to imagine that there was an almost wholly pre-occupying clash of these same two interests before Kerensky fell.

Socialists, like human beings, are usually unintelligent, but sometimes they seem more unintelligent than they are because they have a system of meanings that is not familiar to their critics. By 'the Revolution', for instance, John Reed does not mean the overthrow of Tsarism, he means the gradual coming into power of an industrial government, the Council of Workmen and Soldiers, which ran parallel with Kerensky's political coalition for a long time, gradually and inexorably superseding it. Knowing this, even though I am willing to grant, in Reed's absence, that he is, like the rest of us, too young and able-bodied to be as intelligent as the *Manchester Guardian*, I hesitate to convict him of 'childish nonsense'.

I also want to ask our distinguished correspondent to hold the thought that we may possibly, with the passage of time become that Socialist journal that he longs for – and that we all, for that matter, long for. In my own case I can feel wisdom and 'weighty judgment' creeping on me month by month, and my sister, who was born with these afflictions, is absolutely determined to make

this magazine the standard social revolutionary weekly.¹

Of course I can't hold out the same hopes of John Reed. He is younger than we are and still believes in using his imagination when he writes prose. But I am quite sure that in the course of about twenty years – provided our activities in that time are not too much circumscribed – we will all arrive at an age and degree of intellectual strength where we will be able to wield 'weighty judgments' with as familiar a grace as the *Manchester Guardian*, or Mr Hapgood himself. Meanwhile we are more grateful for his critical attention than pained at his perception of our inadequacy.

Max Eastman

FROM JOHN REED

My dear Mr. Hapgood:

I came into the office just as Max Eastman finished his reply to you, and at the very moment of going to press I want to hastily try to answer you myself.

The question of the unintelligence of American party Socialists I leave to Max to deal with, as your letter seems not to apply to my intelligence at all, but simply to my observation and my integrity as a reporter.

Eastman does right in quoting the remainder of my remarks, but perhaps I have not made the situation clear enough. I did not ever mean to say that Kerensky, or any of the other 'moderate' Socialist leaders, wanted to 'wreck the revolution'. It was the *bourgeois* wing of the Provisional Government which attempted to do that, and quite openly, too.

Factories were shut down with the avowed purpose of starving the workers into abating their democratic enthusiasms; food and supplies were diverted from the Army, in order to destroy the soldiers' committees and 'reestablish discipline' – there is even a mountain of proof to indicate that the fall of Riga was no accident, but carefully arranged by the Army chiefs for the same purpose; Rodzyanko, at the Moscow Business Men's Conference, said: 'The loss of Petrograd to the Germans would not be a misfortune; in the first place it would destroy the insubordinate Baltic Fleet, and in the second place it would eliminate the revolutionary Petrograd workmen'; in the country the land-owners provoked agrarian

revolt, with the open sympathy of the bourgeoisie in the Provisional Government, by arresting the Land Committees created by the Provisional Government itself in the exercise of their legal duties; on the railroads emissaries of the administrations and the share-holders of private roads were caught red-handed puncturing engine-boilers. I could go on for pages, backed up by detailed proof. My papers, however, are still in the hands of the State Department, so I cannot give the details here. If I had those papers I could also show you an interview I had with Lyanozov, the Russian Oil King; another with Kokovtsev, Secretary of the Petrograd cadets, etc.

As for Kerensky and the 'moderate' Socialists, the part they played was that of unwilling tools in this campaign – because they held so strongly to the idea of coalition with the bourgeoisie that they were finally forced to become its defenders. In the Kerensky Government, to which I referred in the article you criticize, the bourgeoisie and not the Kerensky group were the ruling powers.

The Kerensky group played a part, however, not as disgraceful as that played in Germany by Scheidemann and in France by Gustave Hervé, whose papers the *Vorwaerts* and *Humanité* (now *La Victoire*, I believe), are so eulogized by you for their 'weighty judgment'.² And the action of the Kerensky group, in the coalition government which attempted in the summer and fall of 1917 to wreck the Russian Revolution, was the sole cause of their downfall; just as the action of Scheidemann and Hervé will be the cause of theirs.

One word more. Undoubtedly when you quote my word 'revolution', you have in your mind the so-called 'first revolution' of March, 1917. By 'revolution' I did not mean that at all. I meant the whole Russian revolution, which to my mind is one unity from March, 1917, down to the present day. Any other interpretation would correspond to the denomination of the different periods of the French Revolution as different revolutions. There was only one French Revolution, although the phase of the Constituante and that of the Convention are so different.

But the Russian Revolution is easily provable, to those who have watched it closely, to have been even more of a unified organic growth than the French Revolution. Every development and change in the Russian Revolution was forced by the action of the masses of the people, by demonstrations and the political action of the Soviets. The Duma was forced against its will to take the reins

of government into its hands, although it clearly did not expect or desire the abdication of the Imperial family. The action of the masses hurled down Milyukov's ministry, caused the failure of the Galician offensive, and finally, in November, forced the Soviets to take over the power from the bankrupt Kerensky Government.

When Miliukov, Lvov, and the Duma Liberals were proclaimed the Russian Government, they tried to make it a parliamentary republic. Their action in refusing to obey the Tsar's order of dissolution merely unchained the revolutionary forces of the popular masses, whose idea of the Russian Revolution was not that at all. The proletariat did all the fighting in the Russian Revolution, and when it was ready, proceeded to take over the whole business. From the first, the Russian Revolution was only a bourgeois Liberal front for a real proletarian upheaval strictly according to Marx.

The reason you don't see these things in *Vorwaerts* and in *La Victoire* is because Scheidemann and Hervé are less anxious for Socialism in their own countries than Kerensky was in Russia. The reason you did not see them in the *Manchester Guardian* is because the Russian correspondent for the *Guardian* was Dr David Soskice, Kerensky's secretary and also the Russian press censor, who took correspondents' stories, sent these stories to his own paper, and then refused the correspondents the right to send them to theirs.³

When I get my papers from the State Department I will be very glad to reply to you at length and in detail.

Yours sincerely,

June 4, 1918

John Reed

FROM NORMAN HAPGOOD

New York, June 18, 1918

My dear Eastman:

If I encroach on your space again it is because a year's study of the socialist movements abroad has increased the acuteness of my discontent with the socialists of America. It strikes me that your orthodox party leaders are narrow-minded and your younger and cleverer and more literary group are inclined to think literary or oratorical snap can take the place and do the work of judgment and open-mindedness. The answers that you and John Reed made to

me, in your last issue, are attractive in tone, but do not convince me that I have made my point clear. My proposition is that it is important that prominent writers on socialism should have a fair amount of exactness. To me it is not amusing, but rather discouraging, that in his answer to me Mr Reed shows he is not aware of the existence of the leading socialist paper in France. I referred to *l'Humanité* by name. Mr Reed thinks that Hervé has turned it into *la Victoire*. Of course what Hervé turned into *la Victoire* was *la Guerre Sociale*. It is easy to belong to the Right, a standpatriot inaccessible to ideas. It is easy to stand so far to the Left that one's only duty is to kick and preach a formula, regardless of facts. We lack in this country, in journalism and politics, a Left and a Left-Centre, a massive body that works solidly for progress. Flip-pant and extreme talk and thought may have its use, but it is a different use. I mentioned the *Manchester Guardian* because it is the best organ I know of this Liberalism. I shall not take space to answer Mr. Reed's dismissal of the *Vorwaerts*, uninformed as I think that tone about a paper with an extraordinary hard role to play at present. It and *l'Humanité*, (not *la Victoire*, Heaven save the mark!), are exponents of a socialism that is not chatter but hard work, steady direction, and much knowledge; not formula alone, but the attempt to wed formulas and reality.

Very truly yours,

Norman Hapgood

JOHN REED EXPLAINS

My Dear Mr Hapgood:

You and other critics of my interpretation of the Russian Revolution, as well as many of my own comrades, have called attention to the mistake I made in *The Liberator* of last month, in which I identified Renaudel's paper, the organ of the French majority Socialists, *l'Humanité*, with Gustave Hervé's paper *la Guerre Sociale*, now *la Victoire*.

I am of course extremely mortified that I made that mistake. I wrote my reply to you hastily, and for some reason got the two papers twisted – although I can assure you I know better, having read Jean Jaurès' paper for many years beginning in 1910, when I lived in France.

What I said, however, about the part played by Scheidemann in Germany, as well as the part played by the Kerensky group in Russia, applies equally to Albert Thomas and his supporters in France. The inclusion of Hervé in that category was wrong; he is outside of it, like Charles Edward Russell. The attitude I speak of is well exemplified in an interview with Hjalmar Branting, the Swedish representative of the Thomas–Vandervelde–Scheidemann brand of Socialism, published in *le Temps* of May 18:

'Le Bolchevisme est un très grand péril pour le socialisme, dont il est la caricature.'

As far as I know, *l'Humanité* has given expression only to the bitterly hostile sentiments of the French Majority Socialists toward the Russian Soviets.

You see, Mr Hapgood, in your criticisms of us, you (in the words of Kerensky) 'place yourself at the point of view of the Right' – in the Socialist movement. According to your letter, you hold the opinion that the Left branch of the Socialist movement is devoid of value except as agitation.

I happen to hold revolutionary ideas myself. After due reflection, I feel that this so-called 'working for progress' has got the Socialist movement almost nowhere except into a position of comparative respectability. And I cannot see how admission of my error about *l'Humanité* carries with it endorsement of the 'weighty judgment' of the European social-patriots.

Yours sincerely,

John Reed
The Liberator, July–August 1918

NOTES

1. Crystal Eastman (1881–1928), jointly proprietor of *The Liberator* with her brother, was a distinguished labour lawyer, social investigator and feminist.
2. Philipp Scheidemann (1865–1939) was a member of the Reichstag and first Prime Minister of the Weimar Republic. Gustave Hervé founded *La guerre sociale* in 1906, and conducted anti-militarist propaganda. An ardent patriot after the outbreak of war in 1914, he changed the title of his periodical to *La Victoire*. Hervé became an admirer of Hitler in the 1930s. Reed's error is corrected below.
3. David Soskice was Kerensky's private secretary from July 1917 until the

Bolshevik coup in November. The Soskice Papers in the House of Lords Record Office, deposited by his son Frank Soskice (Lord Stow Hill), shed no light on Reed's accusation, and give no indication that Soskice was even aware of it.

II Letter to Upton Sinclair on Maxim Gorky

Croton-on-Hudson, New York

June 19, 1918

Dear Upton –

I received your letter and appreciate your generosity in taking my estimate of Gorky in lieu of Gorky's estimate of the Russian Revolution.

I feel very doubtful of being able to make you see Gorky as I saw him – or at least as I read him; for although I dined at his house, I didn't succeed in getting any nearer to him than a violent quarrel with Marie Andreeva. But besides his written word, I also had intimate reports of him from the Russian novelist Eugene Zamiatin, for one of whose books Gorky was writing a preface, and from others of Gorky's close friends.¹

Gorky, it is true, stood with the Bolsheviks until the insurrection was in full swing. His party, the *Novaya Zhizn* group (United Social Democratic Internationalists), remained with them afterward too.² Avilov, one of Gorky's best journalists, was Minister of Posts and Telegraphs in the first Soviet Cabinet, and others of Gorky's supporters and of the *Novaya Zhizn* staff were also members of the insurrectionary Military Revolutionary Committee and of the Executive Committee of the Soviets. The editor of the *Novaya Zhizn* himself (name for the moment escapes me), became editor of the Soviet organ *Izvestiya* just before I left.³

Gorky took an original and characteristic attitude. He violently opposed the suppression of the bourgeois and moderate Socialist press, operated by the Bolsheviks in the heat of insurrection, and lifted later. He was horrified at the early arrests which occurred at the same time. But more than all else, he was shocked at the bloodshed.⁴

Now everybody who was in Russia at the time knows that there was almost no bloodshed. The Bolshevik revolution was the least bloody uprising in history. At Moscow there was severe street-fighting, it is true, and about eight hundred persons lost their lives. Gorky was in Moscow during the fighting. He has written, in

his paper, an illuminating series of reports on what he saw. It was evidently the first time Gorky had ever seen fighting. He was astounded and revolted.

For example, he tells this story. He came upon a soldier, standing in an arch-way near the Kremlin, watching. A man darted out of a cross street and ran across the square. The soldier immediately threw up his gun and fired at the running figure, bringing him down.

Gorky asked the soldier why he had shot.

'Why,' answered the man, 'he was running.'

This was, remember, during the street-fighting, which lasted for six days.

Later, in Petrograd, Gorky saw a mob seize a thief and beat him to death – which I think is a method of summary and elementary justice indulged in by most peoples in the time of Revolution – isn't it?

Well, from such things Gorky made up his mind that the 'Russian people', as he said, were 'the cruelest and most bloodthirsty race of savages in the world'.

That is his premise, so to speak. The Bolsheviki were determined and efficient in their plan of proletarian dictatorship. Cruel, however, they were conspicuously not; nor bloodthirsty. Russians in Revolution are laughably merciful and forgiving, to a Westerner. Gorky bases most of his indictment of the Revolution on that ground, but almost anyone who was in Russia last fall can testify as to the lack of bloodshed; if he wants to tell the truth.

As to my analysis of the attitude of the Russian bourgeoisie and the 'moderate' Socialists, I stand where Gorky stood all last year. In what followed, I think perhaps I was in a better position to overlook the violence and injustice which cannot help going on in times of Revolution, and see beyond them to the beauty and bigness of the thing as a whole.

I have noticed before the quotation you send me. This is not the first time most of these accusations have been hurled at the head of the Soviet government. When I was in Petrograd the Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary and bourgeois journals were then saying that the peasants were fighting over the distributed land, that the soldiers were massacring wholesale, that industry was disintegrating into utter chaos. It was not true then; it may be true now. But if it is true, from what I know of Russia I should say that it was not lack of organizing ability, or the power to work together,

or any lack of proof that the thing would work, which caused these things, but the ceaseless and desperate efforts of the ruling class to regain its property by the help of foreign bayonets, coupled with imperialistic foreign invasion from the front, and the threat of the same thing from the rear, and no help or sign of effective sympathy from any quarter of the world.

In my experience, however, the Soviet government was doing phenomenal and creative work in industry, and the peasants were dividing the land and getting to an agreement about it. Fights undoubtedly go on in the villages – the poor peasants were urged to combine against the rich peasants, so as to prevent the rich peasants from hogging more than their share.

Those 'monstrous rumors' are in line with the quantity of legends which find a ready receptacle in Gorky's ear. He already thinks that Russians are monstrous, you see.

The dreaded Mr Bleikhman's advocacy of massacre is nothing new. As in all Revolutions, there is always somebody around Petrograd urging wholesale slaughter. If the bourgeoisie keep on sabotaging and calling upon Germans and Japs to come and save their property, it might even happen. I can't somehow see Russians cold-bloodedly resolving to do it, however, and then doing it.

The Soviets and the workers' democratic organizations are *always* urging the workers to get busy. So much for that.

Maxim Gorky is a very sick man. However, he is very much under the influence of Marie Andreeva, who is beautiful, theatrical and romantic, who wants to manage things herself for the ignorant workingmen, and who finds the Revolution disappointing. Oh that Russian intelligentsia! How profoundly it misunderstands and disapproves of the Russian mass!

Yours

John Reed

Please do send the paper. I don't think your optimisms are justified, or that you are right, but I do recognize that you are honest as the devil.

Upton Sinclair Papers, Lilly Library, Indiana University
(published as 'John Reed vs. Maxim Gorky',
Upton Sinclair's, August 1918)

NOTES

1. Gorky's preface has not been identified, but his writings on Zamyatin appear as '[O. Zamyatine]', *Letopis' zhizni i tvorcestva A. M. Gor'kogo*, Vypusk 3 (1917-1929) (Moscow, 1959). Zamyatin was a contributor to Gorky's *Novaya Zhizn* (see below) and shared the older writer's fears of the consequence of the Bolshevik seizure of power. The two writers were close friends until the mid-1920s, after which time Gorky's opinion of Zamyatin's work became less enthusiastic. None the less, he helped Zamyatin gain permission to emigrate from Russia in 1931. Zamyatin's memoir of Gorky, written in 1936, appears in *A Soviet Heretic: Essays by Yevgeny Zamyatin*, ed. and tr. Mirra Ginsburg (Chicago and London, [1970]).
2. *Novaya Zhizn*, the organ of a fraction of 'Social Democratic Internationalists', was published from 1 May 1917 to July 1918, when it was closed down by the government. Whereas the Martov group in August 1917 refused to break with the Menshevik 'defencists' of the RSDRP (see document 7, note 2), the *Novaya Zhizn* group formed a new party, the United Social Democratic Internationalists in January 1918, and supported the Soviet government on the condition that it would eventually give way to a government based on universal suffrage. In mid-1918 *Novaya Zhizn* broke with the USDI over this issue. The USDI merged with the RKP on 30 December 1919.
3. The editors of *Novaya Zhizn* were, in addition to Gorky, N. Himmer (Sukhanov), V. Desnitsky (Stroev) and A. Tikhonov (Serebrov).
4. A selection of Gorky's articles published in *Novaya Zhizn* have been published under the title *Untimely Thoughts: Essays on Revolution, Culture and the Bolsheviks 1917-1918* (London, 1970).

20

The Case for the Bolsheviks

[Editor's note.] Mr Reed has recently returned from Russia, where he took an active part in the Bolshevik campaign of international revolutionary propaganda organized shortly after the Russian revolution. His viewpoint is in interesting contrast to that presented by Edward A. Ross, professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin, in his article published recently in The Independent, 'How the Bolsheviks Got on Top'. While The Independent is by no means in entire accord with the Socialist program Mr Reed advocates, we believe always in giving our readers a chance to choose between conflicting views on important questions of the day. Mr Reed presents authoritatively the case for the Bolsheviks.

An undated despatch from Moscow published in the *New York Times* of May 23 reports a speech made by Lenin before the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviets, evidently about the 10th of May. Among other things Lenin said:

'We are now the *oborontsy*, (*oborontsy* – defenders, once the appellation of the war-to-a-finish party) 'and since November 7 we have won the right to defend our fatherland. We shall defend, not a "Great Power", for there is nothing of Russia left but Great Russia; not national interests, because for us the interests of the world's socialism stand higher than national interests.'

In spite of unintelligent assertion to the contrary, the Soviet leaders and the Russian masses accepted the German peace terms at Brest purely as a matter of necessity. In ratifying the treaty the All-Russian Soviets referred to it as 'this shameful peace forced upon us by German imperialists'. And ever since peace was concluded the Russians have regarded it as an opportunity for strengthening the internal regime, and organizing for a resumption of the struggle; not that of the Allies against the Central Powers, but of 'the world's socialism', championed by Soviet Russia, against the world's predatory capitalism, whose arch-exponent is Imperial Germany.

Nobody realizes the danger of Imperial Germany better than the Soviet leaders. Instead of being the wild-haired ignoramuses they are popularly portrayed, Lenin, Trotsky, Chicherin and other Bolsheviks and Left Socialist Revolutionaries are very thorough students of international relations, the tariff, colonial policy, and so forth. All of them realize very clearly that the progress of socialism under a world-wide Prussian hegemony would be infinitely retarded.

The Bolsheviks did not wait until this minute to make war against Germany. When the first revolution broke out in March, 1917, and the Russian armies in the West remained immobile for four months, the revolutionists immediately set about fraternizing with their German and Austrian neighbors. Of the effects of this first fraternization I have had hundreds of proofs. The German high command was not prepared for it; whole regiments, whole divisions were permeated with propaganda. It has never been so well done since that time.

Upon this spontaneous soldiers' peace broke suddenly the Galician offensive of July, urged by Kerensky. Nothing could have been more welcome to the German Staff; the officers were able to say to their troops, 'You see, we were right. You believed what the Russians told you. And then, when they got you off your guard, they turned around and stabbed you in the back!' I have seen a despairing letter written by the German revolutionist, Rosa Luxemburg to a Russian Socialist, in which she said, 'So you have broken the peace! . . . When our troops were so disorganized that their own officers could not force them to advance; when the revolutionary spirit was spreading throughout Germany. . . . You Russians fell upon the German troops, and now they won't believe you any more . . .'¹

The reason for the failure of the Galician offensive was the refusal of the majority of the Russian troops to support the policy of foreign conquest, as they considered it, embarked upon by Kerensky and his army.

All through the autumn the Bolshevik papers and the Bolshevik speakers, with all their bitter criticism of the Allies, their ceaseless reiteration that neither of the belligerent groups was fighting for democratic peace-terms, emphasized in their own way the sins of the German Imperial Government.

'The German Kaiser,' said *Rabochii Put*, the Bolshevik organ, 'covered with the blood of his millions of victims, is only waiting

for an opportunity to push his armies against Petrograd.' But it argued at the same time that the Russian bourgeoisie was his ally, and that the Allied bourgeoisie was not unsympathetic . . .

The November revolution was the signal, coincidentally with the offering of peace terms to all the belligerents for a mighty campaign of propaganda launched against the German Government. Order was given by Krylenko, the Bolshevik commander-in-chief of the armies, for all troops to begin fraternizing at once; and this was obeyed with such zest that the German General Hoffmann protested almost daily during all the time of the Brest negotiations.

At the same time there was organized, as a department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda, of which Boris Reinstein, an American, was Commissar, and in which I had the privilege of working.²

Though concerned with spreading revolutionary propaganda in all countries, the immediate task of the bureau was the corrupting of the German people. In connection with the Press Bureau we published daily papers in German (*Die Fackel*, afterward *Völkerfriede*), in Hungarian (*Nemzet közi Szocialista*), in Rumanian (*Inainte*), in Bohemian and in Serbo-Croatian. These were printed in editions of 500,000 and shipped to the front to be smuggled into the enemy trenches. Besides this there were hundreds of proclamations, 'To Our German Brothers!' translations of the Soviet decrees, of pamphlets by Lenin, etc.

Almost all the deserters passed through our office. Often they came with demands for literature, or even *speakers*, to take back and smuggle into the German lines. Once we received a delegation of German soldiers from the island of Oesel, who wanted propaganda material for their comrades. To listen to all these men one would think that the German eastern line, in spite of the terrible discipline in which it was kept, was slowly disintegrating. One of Trotsky's reasons for so desperately prolonging the Brest negotiations was to give this process time to work.

As it was, the German strikes, when they came, took the form of Soviets of Workers' Deputies; and what is not generally known, the German advance into Russia after Brest was not performed by the regular troops on the Russian front, but by a *volunteer army* made up of men chosen carefully from the western front. From all I have learned, I am of the opinion that the German troops on the Russian front were too untrustworthy to order in.

Another branch of our work, in connection with the Bureau of

War Prisoners, was the organizing of the German and Austrian captives in Russia. We held several conventions of delegates from war prisoners' organizations all over the country, in which the Bolshevik ferment had long been working. With our help these organizations, many thousands strong, published their own papers in their own languages, and sent speakers and organizers on the road. The great mass of the common soldier prisoners were thoroughly receptive to Bolshevik doctrines; the Prussians, however, of whom there were less than thirty thousand out of the million and a half, were harder to convert. But we were so successful that the most determined opposition which greeted the German invasion after Brest was that of war-prisoners fighting under the red flag of the Soviets.

In the new Red Army of Russia the war-prisoners form an important part. Arthur Ransome, in a dispatch to the *New York Times*, describes their appearance in the parade which was reviewed by Count von Mirbach, the German envoy – 'a company . . . marching by with red banners printed with revolutionary inscriptions in German . . .'

On the Swedish ship which carried me from Finland to Stockholm³ were two officers of the German Army Intelligence Service. They were frankly worried.

'Oh, of course, we shall have peace,' said one, 'and the Baltic provinces will be ours. But we are in a serious dilemma; how can we resume commercial relations with this new Russian Government? How can we allow foodstuffs and raw materials to come into Germany, and still keep out Bolshevism?'

Of course the only way that the Soviet Government can combat the diplomatic bullying, the commercial and financial undermining, and the mailed fist of Germany is by armed force. This armed force has been building in Russia since November – the new Red Army.

The old Russian army was almost completely destroyed, first by the deliberate disorganization engineered by the Court of Nicholas II, and second by the bitter struggle between the officers, assisted by the Russian propertied classes, and the revolutionary soldiers. The November revolutionary government allowed them formally to disband – action which the majority of the soldiers had already taken in fact.

The new volunteer Socialist army, whose numbers had increased during the German invasion to several hundreds of thou-

sands, was recruited from the ranks of the young city workers, full of fire and enthusiasm, who received their stern baptism of blood during the November uprising, against the Ukrainian Rada, Kaledin and his Cossacks, and Kerensky. These now form a small, compact, well-equipped and well-drilled army, fired with revolutionary consciousness. And the soldiers of the old army, having been absorbed again into their villages, and having received each his piece of land in the general division, are coming back to the ranks, as Lenin says, 'with the knowledge that they have something to fight for'.

Meanwhile, how is Russia, not yet quite ready, acting to prevent the German economic conquest? News from Russia is fragmentary, but from what I saw beginning at the time I left, I think I can tell. Strikes, sabotage, delay, diplomacy – all the subtle means by which an unwilling people hinders the activities of hated conquerors. The German Government, which counted so essentially upon the supplies to be wrenched out of helpless Russia, has been explaining to its people that such things are not to be managed in a day . . .

Russia is still theoretically a sovereign state. If we want to see how impeded German conquest is working, let us take the Ukraine, infinitely less consciously revolutionary, and under German domination as well. The measure of Germany's success in dealing with the Ukraine is measured by the number of German troops needed to accomplish her will there. And according to the United States State Department, there are *seventy-two German and Austrian divisions – more than eight hundred thousand men* in the Ukraine today. Every railroad must be picketed; every peasant cart must have its patrol. Such is the Russian answer to the German mailed fist, until her own fist is mailed.

Meanwhile, the Russian propaganda is working steadily, and is not to be checked by bayonets. All the world admits now that Austria is at the breaking-point because of it. In Germany the movement which culminated in the great strikes has again subsided, but the causes which produced that movement still remain. And will grow . . .

The Independent, 13 July 1918

NOTES

1. Reed first used Luxemburg's letter of July 1917 in document 11. See also document 28.
2. Accounts of Reed's experiences working for the Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appear in documents 22 and 28. He was employed in the Bureau by Reinstein (see Biographical Notes) from 1 December 1917 to 7 February 1918.
3. Closely watched by American authorities, who had grown increasingly concerned at Reed's Bolshevik sympathies, he left Petrograd to return to the United States, by way of Finland and Sweden, in early February 1918. By order of the Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, Reed was denied a visa to return home and forced to wait in Christiania (Oslo) until valid travel papers were issued by the American Embassy. It was during this period that Reed began to write documents 14 I and II.

21

'Kerensky is Coming!'

(Rumor has it that Kerensky is on his way to America to act as a center for propaganda in the United States against the Russian Revolution. For those who believe that a counter-revolutionary movement led by Kerensky might be successful, it may be instructive to read the story of his final defeat at the gates of Petrograd – J. R.)

'Kerensky is coming!'

In Smolny Institute, where the Bolsheviks rode the rocking insurrection, there was half-panic, half-desperation among all the leaders except Lenin, Trotsky, and one or two others; among the soldiers hesitation; among the workmen and the Kronstadt sailors a fierce exultant defiance.

Kerensky, hurling proclamations and threats as he came, rolled up from the southwest with a horde of Cossacks, to win back the capital.

It was November 10. The Bolsheviks had been in control three days, with the world against them. Under their iron hands the city seethed and boiled. At the Duma, around which were grouped all the anti-Bolshevik elements – the moderate and conservative Socialists as well the 'bourgeois' parties – a great crowd was gathered, composed of business and professional men, Socialist 'intellectuals', and the officials of the Kerensky Government; there were present no common soldiers, no workingmen, no peasants.

At this particular moment the Committee for Salvation of Country and Revolution was forming a new government, and debating hotly whether or not the representatives of the Bolshevik party should be admitted. Around it swarmed army officers, journalists, and the foreign diplomats.

Kerensky was only twelve miles away – eight miles – four miles, with an army of five thousand – ten thousand – twenty thousand men. He had captured Gatchina, the Gatchina Soviet had fled, half the garrison had surrendered and the other half had fallen back in disorder on Petrograd. He was at the gates of Tsarskoe Selo. He

would triumphantly enter the city in two days – twelve hours . . .

Up at Smolny, the Military Revolutionary Committee roared like a fly-wheel day and night, throwing off spark-like showers of orders. Here the dim corridors echoed to the tramp of hurrying factory-workers with crossed bandoleers and rifles, grim, silent men, hollow-eyed from loss of sleep, and with aimless wandering bands of soldiers. On piles of heaped-up newspapers and proclamations in the committee-rooms hundreds snored in utter exhaustion. Couriers came and went, running or in commandeered automobiles; and commissars – common soldiers, workmen, armed with the power of life and death, invested with the authority of the risen proletariat, – dashed out to the four corners of the city, the front, and all vast Russia, to command, plead, argue, fight . . .

In the great white ball-room the Petrograd Soviet met, a bristle of bayonets, and in the next chamber the Central Executive Committee of the all-Russian Soviets, the new parliament of proletarian Russia.

Consider these Bolsheviks. Alone they had set up a Government in which the Minister of Finance was appointed because he had once been a clerk in a French bank – there was no other man to put there; in which the Minister of Commerce and Industry was a historian, without the slightest conception of commerce. The army and navy were under the command of a common sailor, Dybenko, a cadet, Krylenko, and a civilian, Antonov.¹

All the Government employees had declared a strike against them. The Post and Telegraph Employees' Union refused to transmit their telegrams or deliver their mail. The Railway Workers' Union would not transport them. Their very telephone wires were cut.

They could not communicate with the provinces, with the front, or with Europe. They did not know what was going on anywhere. Outside of a few trained and educated men they were supported only by the masses of the Petrograd workmen and women and soldiers – but by all of them. Was Russia like Petrograd? Were the workmen everywhere ready for insurrection? Would the army at the front rise? Would the peasants support them? Lenin believed that Russia was ripe. The All-Russian Soviets had met on November 7 and endorsed the Revolution by an overwhelming majority – and now the delegates were speeding back to their homes, to the corners of Russia, carrying word of what had happened in Petro-

grad. Volodarsky told me that even if the All-Russian Soviets had been prevented from meeting, still there would have been an insurrection. 'We are realists,' he said.

As a matter of fact, success depended on the correctness of the hypothesis that the Russian proletariat was ready for revolt.

In the court-yard of Smolny Institute stood an automobile, upon the running-board of which soldiers were trying to fasten two bicycles. The chauffeur protested violently. True, he was a Bolshevik, and the automobile had been confiscated; true, it was to carry the Ministers of War and of the Navy to the front, and the bicycles were for the use of the couriers; but the automobile was nicely enamelled, and the chauffeur's professional pride revolted at the damage which would be done to the enamel . . . So the bicycles were abandoned.

Leaning against the side of the machine was a slight man with a thin beard and heavy glasses over eyes fixed and red-rimmed from three days and nights without rest, his shirt collar filthy, his conversation painful and chaotic from terrible fatigue. A great bearded sailor, with the clear eyes of youth, prowled restlessly about, absently toying with an enormous blue-steel revolver, which never left his hand. These were Antonov and Dybenko.

Could we go with them to the front? We could not. The automobile would only hold five – the two Ministers, two couriers and the chauffeur. My Russian comrade, however, whom I will call Koslov, calmly got in and sat down, nor could any argument dislodge him; so finally Antonov and Dybenko gave up.²

I see no reason to disbelieve Koslov's story of the trip. As they went down the Suvorovsky Prospect, someone mentioned that they might be out for three or four days, in a country indifferently well provisioned. Antonov stopped the car and asked Koslov to get out and buy provisions – about fifty roubles' worth. Money? The Minister of War looked through his pockets – he hadn't a kopek. The Minister of the Navy was broke. So was the chauffeur. So were the couriers. Koslov bought the provisions . . .

When they reached the Nevsky the automobile blew out a tire, and all got out. 'Comandeer an automobile!' suggested Dybenko, waving the revolver. Antonov stood in the middle of the street and signalled to a passing machine to halt.

'I want that automobile!' he said to the lone soldier who was driving.

'You won't get it,' responded the soldier.

'Do you know who I am?' asked Antonov, producing a paper upon which was written a commission appointing him commander-in-chief of all the armies of the Russian Republic. 'In this paper it says that all my orders must be obeyed without question.'

'I don't care if you are the devil himself,' retorted the soldier. 'This automobile belongs to the committee of the First Machine Gun Regiment, and we're carrying ammunition in it, and you can't have it.' Whereupon he drove on . . .

The difficulty, however, was soon solved by the appearance of an old battered machine flying the Italian flag, (in time of trouble private machines were registered in the name of some foreign consulate, so as to be safe from requisition), from the interior of which was dislodged a fat citizen in an expensive fur coat, and the party continued on its way.

Arrived at Kolpino, a factory town about twenty miles out on the Nikolai Railway, Antonov asked for the commandant of the Red Guard.³ He was led to the edge of the town, where about five hundred factory workmen had dug trenches and were waiting for the Cossacks.

'Everything all right here, comrade?' asked Antonov.

'Everything perfect, comrade,' answered the commander, 'except that we have no ammunition.'

'In Smolny there are two billion rounds,' Antonov told him. 'I will give you an order.' He felt in his pockets. 'Has anybody a piece of paper?'

Dybenko had none. The chauffeur had none – neither had the couriers or the commander. Koslov offered his notebook, from which a page was torn.

'Have you got a pencil?' asked Antonov, rummaging through his clothes. Dybenko had no pencil – neither, needless to say, had anyone – except Koslov . . .

* * *

Meanwhile late in the afternoon I took a train for Tsarskoe Selo.⁴ In the station nobody knew just where Kerensky was, or where the front lay. Trains went no further, however, than Tsarskoe Selo . . .

The train was full of commuters and country people going home. They had the evening papers in their hands, and the talk was all of the Bolshevik rising. Outside of that, however, you would never have realized that civil war was splitting mighty

Russia in two, and that the train was headed into the zone of battle. Out of the window we could see in the swift-deepening darkness, masses of soldiers going irregularly along the muddy road toward the city, flinging their arms out in argument. That was all. Back along the flat horizon the glow of the city's lights faded down the night. A street-car crawled distantly along a far-flung suburban street.

Tsarskoe Selo station was calm, though knots of soldiers stood here and there talking in low tones and looking uneasily down the empty track that led to Gatchina. I asked some of them what side they were on. 'Well,' said a spokesman, 'we don't know exactly the rights of the matter . . . There is no doubt that Kerensky is a provocator, but we do not consider it right for Russian men to be shooting Russian men.'

The commandant of the station proved to be a big, jovial, bearded common soldier, wearing the arm-band of a regimental committee. Our credentials from Smolny Institute commanded immediate respect. He was plainly for the Soviets, but bewildered.

'There was a commissar from the Soviets here this morning, but he went away when the Cossaks came.'

'The Cossacks are here, then?'

He nodded, gloomily, 'There has been a battle. The Cossacks came this morning. They captured two or three hundred of our troops, and killed about twelve.'

'Where are the Cossacks?'

'Well, they didn't come down here. I don't know just where they are. Off that way . . .' He waved his arm vaguely west.

We had dinner – an excellent dinner, by the way, much better and cheaper than could be got in Petrograd – in the station restaurant, and then sallied out into the town. Just outside the door were two soldiers, evidently on guard, with rifles and bayonets fixed. They were surrounded by a crowd of business men, government officials, and students, who were attacking them with passionate argument and epithet. The soldiers were uncomfortable and hurt, like children who are being unjustly scolded.

A tall young man with a supercilious expression, dressed in the uniform of a student, was leading the attack.

'You realize, I presume,' he said insolently, 'that by taking up arms against your brothers you are making yourselves the tools of murderers and traitors?'

'Now brother,' answered the soldier earnestly, 'you don't

understand. There are two classes, don't you see, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. We –'

'Oh I know that silly talk!' broke in the student rudely. 'A bunch of ignorant peasants like you hear somebody bawling a few catch-words. You don't understand what they mean. You just echo them like a lot of parrots.' The crowd laughed. 'Now I've been a Socialist for twenty years. I'm a Marxian student. And I tell you that this isn't Socialism you are fighting for. It's just plain pro-German anarchy!'

'Oh yes, I know,' answered the soldier, with sweat dripping from his brow. 'You are an educated man, that is easy to see, and I am only a simple man. But it seems to me –'

'I suppose,' interrupted the other contemptuously, 'that you believe Lenin is a real friend of the proletariat?'

'Yes I do,' answered the soldier, suffering.

'Well, my friend, do you know that Lenin was sent through Germany in a closed car? Do you know that Lenin took money from the Germans?'

'Well, I don't know much about that,' answered the soldier stubbornly, 'but it seems to me that what he says is what I want, and all the simple men like me. Now there are two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat –'

'You are a fool! Why, my friend, I spent two years in Schlüsselburg for revolutionary activity, when you were still shooting down revolutionists and singing "God Save the Tsar!" My name is Vasili Georgevich Panim. Didn't you ever hear of me?'

'I'm sorry to say I never did,' answered the soldier with humility. 'But then, I am not an educated man. You are probably a great hero.'

'I am,' said the student with conviction. 'And I am opposed to the Bolsheviks, who are destroying our Russia, our free revolution. Now how do you account for that?'

'The soldier scratched his head. 'I can't account for it at all,' he said, grimacing with the pain of his intellectual processes. 'To me it seems perfectly simple – but then, I'm not well-educated. It seems like there are only two classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie –'

'There you go again with your silly formula!' cried the student.

' – only two classes,' went on the soldier, doggedly. 'And whoever isn't on one side is on the other.' . . .

We wandered on up the street, whose lights were few and far between, and along which people rarely passed. A threatening

silence hung over the place – as of a sort of purgatory between heaven and hell, a political No Man's Land. Only the barber shops were all brilliantly lighted and crowded, and a line formed in front of the doors of the public bath; for it was Saturday night, when all Russia bathes and perfumes itself. I haven't the slightest doubt that Soviet troops and Cossacks mingled in the places where these ceremonies were performed . . .

We strolled toward the Imperial Palaces, along the edge of the vast, dark gardens, their fantastic pavilions and ornamental bridges looming uncertainly in the night, and soft water splashing from the fountains. At one place where a ridiculous iron swan spat unceasingly from an artificial grotto, we were suddenly aware of observation, and looked up to encounter the sullen, suspicious gaze of half a dozen gigantic armed soldiers, who stared moodily down from a grassy terrace. I climbed up to them.

'Who are you?' I asked.

'We are the guard,' answered one. They all looked very depressed, as undoubtedly they were, from weeks and weeks of all-day all-night argument and debate.

'Are you Kerensky's troops, or the Soviets?'

There was silence for a moment, as they looked uneasily at each other. Then, 'We are neutral,' said he.

We went on through the arch of the huge Ekaterina Palace, into the Palace enclosure itself, asking for headquarters. A sentry outside a door in a curving white wing of the Palace said that the commandant was outside.⁵

In a graceful, white, Georgian room, divided into unequal parts by a two-sided fire-place, a group of officers stood anxiously talking. They were pale and distracted, and evidently hadn't slept. To one, an oldish man with a white beard, his uniform studded with decorations, who was pointed out as the Colonel, we showed our Bolshevik papers.

He seemed surprised. 'How did you get here without being killed?' he asked politely. 'It is very dangerous in the streets just now. Political passion is running very high in Tsarskoe Selo. There was a battle this morning, and there will another tomorrow morning. Kerensky is to enter the town at eight o'clock.'

'Where are the Cossacks?'

'About a mile over that way.' He waved his arms.

'And you will defend the city against them?'

'Oh dear no.' He smiled. 'We are holding the city for Kerensky.'

Our hearts sank, for the papers we had stated that we were International Socialists, revolutionary to the core. The Colonel cleared his throat. 'About those passes of yours,' he went on. 'Your lives will be in danger if you are captured. Therefore, if you want to see the battle, I will give you an order for rooms in the officers' hotel, and if you will come back here at seven o'clock in the morning, I will give you new passes.'

'So you are for Kerensky?' we said.

'Well, not exactly *for* Kerensky.' The Colonel hesitated. 'You see, most of the soldiers in the garrison are Bolsheviks, and today, after the battle, they all went away in the direction of Petrograd, taking the artillery with them. You might say that none of the *soldiers* are for Kerensky; but some of them just don't want to fight at all. The *officers* have almost all gone over to Kerensky's forces, or simply gone away. We are – ahem – in a most difficult position, as you see . . .'

We did not wait for the battle.⁶ Looking out of the window as we sped through the cold dark, I caught glimpses of dun masses of soldiers gesticulating in the light of fires, and of clusters of armored cars halted close together on cross-roads, the chauffeurs hanging out of the turrets and shouting to each other.

The next morning the Cossacks entered Tsarskoe Selo,⁷ Kerensky himself riding a white horse. From the top of a little hill beyond the town he could see the golden spires and many-colored cupolas, the sprawling grey immensity of the capital spread out along the dreary plain, and beyond, the steely Gulf of Finland. Every hour General Krasnov was issuing proclamations, 'In the name of the Supreme Commandant, at the head of the loyal troops under Petrograd', calling upon the Petrograd garrison to return to their duty and 'all those who have been led astray by false counsels or the vain promises of the usurpers' – under pain of dire punishment when the city fell. Ten miles away! The Bolshevik troops falling back in the direst confusion; a counter-revolution ready to break in the capital; the Bolsheviks isolated . . .

There was no battle in Tsarskoe after all. But Kerensky made one fatal mistake. Ascertaining that there were 'neutral' regiments in the vicinity, he adopted a high-handed method of dealing with them. To the barracks of the Second Tsarskoe Selo Rifles he sent a message to surrender their arms, and gave them ten minutes to think it over in. Now this savored too much of the old regime to these soldiers, who, after all, had been governing themselves by

committee for half a year. They were not Bolsheviks, they did not want to fight Kerensky; but they would not submit to peremptory authority. At the end of the ten minutes Kerensky's artillery dropped a shell or two on their barracks; seven were killed, more wounded; and from that moment the Second Tsarskoe Selo Rifle ceased to be neutral . . .

In Petrograd, Smolny was a huge uproar. A delegation from the Semenov Regiment, sent out to stop the Cossacks, was trying to explain to the Military Revolutionary Committee how it was that most of them had been surrounded and captured. The regiments of the garrison, it was reported, had been corrupted by commissars of the City Duma, who had been around trying to persuade the soldiers to remain 'neutral', so that the Cossacks and *junkers* might be turned loose in the city; Krylenko started out in a fast automobile to make the rounds of the barracks and win them back. We had witnessed, in the vast half-gloom of the Mikhailovsky Manège, the battle of speakers over the Armored Car Division, the far-famed *Brunnoviki*; where, in the bitter cold, two thousand great child-like men stood listening with painful intensity to the arguments of the different speakers for five long hours, and finally went Bolshevik with the ponderous roar of an avalanche⁸ . . . A message arrived from Pulkovo, this side of the Tsarskoe Selo, where the Bolsheviks were digging trenches, asking for 'two truck-loads of orators'.

This is the Russian way of making civil war. It was the *propaganda* of the revolutionary troops which destroyed the forces of Kornilov. Russians will always listen . . . In this case the old proclamations and pamphlets used against Kornilov were resurrected and shipped to the front. 'Eighteen agitators' were collected by the Military Revolutionary Committee, and hurtled off down the street in motor trucks, to corrupt the enemy.

On Saturday at three o'clock, the Military Revolutionary Committee loosed the full revolutionary force of the proletariat; a telephonogram was sent out to the factories to shut down and turn out the Red Guard. All around the grey horizon the whistles blew, and the hundreds of thousands of workers poured out in tides, bristling. Petrograd hummed like a beaten hive. Along the broad roads white with the first light fall of snow, the city belched its slums. As far as the eye could reach the roads were crowded – with rifles and crossed cartridge belts over their working clothes, – women, some with guns, some with spades, picks, some carrying

rolls of bandages, red crosses pinned on their arms, – children . . . Such an immense, spontaneous outpouring of a city was never seen! They rolled along torrent-like, companies of soldiers borne with them, guns, auto-trucks, wagons – the revolutionary proletariat defending with its naked breast the capital of the Socialist republic.

That night Kerensky and his Cossacks attacked all along a wide front, and untrained masses of people made a stand. What had happened to all that disorganization, panic? What change had come over those halves of garrisons which had retreated in disorder? Who had brought order out of chaos, and co-ordination between the thousands of wavering regulars and the hundreds of thousands of untrained workers? Nobody – nothing – but the concerted desire that the new revolution should win, that forever the powers of ‘coalition’ and of the Cossacks should be smashed. Things were done that night at Krasnoe Selo, at Pulkovo, which will never be forgotten in the history of revolutions. The Red Guards rushed in masses, rushed the cannon, rushed the Cossacks and pulled them from their horses. Hundreds of workers were killed, and the plain was full of riderless Cossack steeds when morning came, and truce . . .

Zalkind, later Trotsky’s adjunct in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, was riding in an automobile with Vera Slutskaya, a veteran woman revolutionist, after both sides had agreed to stop firing. The train on which Kerensky rode carried a cannon, and I suppose the gunner couldn’t resist the temptation to take a shot at the lone machine with the red flag floating over it. The shell went through the automobile, carrying away a door. Zalkind, who was in the midst of a discussion with Slutskaya, turned around in the middle of a sentence to find himself addressing a corpse – Slutskaya’s chin and breast had been torn off.⁹

They hurried the body to a large building beside the road, which proved to be a retiring home – a sort of half convent – for aged ladies of the aristocracy. These ladies, since the fall of their beloved Tsar, had ceased to follow politics, except for venting their hatred against Kerensky. They ran out now, and surrounding the automobile with cries of pity and horror, demanded to know who had done this thing. Zalkind told them that it was Kerensky. ‘Ah!’ they said. ‘I always knew he was a Jew!’

When the truce ended Kerensky’s Cossacks had retreated. They gave up Tsarskoe Selo the same hour, and fell back on Gatchina;

and when I reached Tsarskoe again late that morning, the Army of the Risen People was joyously pressing on.

I went to Tsarskoe in a Red Cross ambulance, which happened to be leaving Smolny for that indefinite region known as 'the revolutionary front'. The soldier who was driving had no objections to me or anybody else; in fact, he was lonely, and wanted somebody to talk to. Bumping down the streets he decided that he was hungry; nothing would do but that we turn into a nearby barracks and get something to eat. The Battalion Committee was just sitting down to lunch around an enormous common bowl of *kasha* and another of *shchi*. Each man took his wooden spoon out of his boot and fell to. When the Committee heard that we were going to the front, they suddenly decided to come with us. The Colonel in command, who happened in just about that time decided he would go too; he therefore asked, and received permission from the committee. Revolvers were served all around – perhaps we would run into Cossacks.

Down the Zagorodny Prospekt a Red Guard stopped us. Were we going to the front? Would we take several thousand newspapers to the comrades? He dumped them in and got in himself. Out under the great grey city gate, carved with inscriptions recording Imperial conquest over Central Asia, Persia and the Middle East, crowned with huge gilt Imperial monograms and eagles, to the wide road, running straight as an arrow, and thronged with the returning conquerors, workers, soldiers, women, and with new floods that the exhaustless city poured forth to take their places. A column of disheveled artillery passed, singing and shouting. A peasant cart drove by whereon bodies of workmen and soldiers were indiscriminately heaped, writhing with low groans . . .

At Pulkovo there was a jam of horses, guns, marching troops and Red Guards straggling indiscriminately. A happy self-congratulatory roar went up from them. This was the place of victorious battle. On all the shot-marked houses home-made Red Cross flags floated. In the little public square formed by the junction of the roads half a dozen Red Guards were trying to ride plunging Cossack horses, to the immense amusement of the crowd. We staggered up the muddy hill to Upper Pulkovo, and at length came into Tsarskoe, animated with the swaggering heroes of the proletarian horde.

Now the palace where the Soviet had met was a busy place. Red

Guards and sailors filled the court-yard, sentries stood at the doors, and a throng of couriers and commissars pushed in and out. In the Soviet room a samovar had been set up, and fifty or more workers, soldiers, sailors and officers stood around, drinking tea and talking at the top of their voices. In one corner two clumsy-handed workingmen were trying to make a multigraphing machine go. At the center table, the huge Dybenko bent over a map, marking out positions for the troops with a red and blue pencil, sticking his tongue out the corner of his mouth as he worked. In his free hand he carried, as always, the same enormous blue-steel revolver. Anon he sat himself down at a typewriter and pounded away with one finger; every little while he would pause, pick up the revolver, and lovingly spin the chamber.

A couch lay along the wall, and on this was stretched the body of a young workman. Two Red Guards were bending over him, but the rest of the company did not pay any attention. In his breast was a hole; through his clothes fresh blood came welling up with every heart-beat. His eyes were closed, and his young, bearded face was greenish-white. Faintly and slowly he still breathed, with every breath sighing, '*Mir budet! Mir budet!* (Peace is coming! Peace is coming!)'¹⁰

Out in front an auto-truck was going to the front. Half a dozen Red Guards, some sailors, and a soldier or two under command of a huge workman clambered in, and shouted to me to come along. Red Guards issued from headquarters, each of them staggering under an arm-load of small, corrugated-iron bombs, filled with *groubit* – which, they say is ten times as strong, and five times as sensitive as dynamite; these they threw carelessly into the truck. A three-inch cannon was loaded and then tied onto the tail of the truck with bits of rope and wire.

We started with a shout, at top speed of course; the heavy truck swayed from side to side. The cannon leaped from one wheel to the other, and the *groubit* bombs went rolling back and forth over our feet, fetching up against the sides of the car with a crash.

The big Red Guard, whose name was Vladimir Nikolaevich, plied me with questions about America. 'Why did America come into the war? Are the American workers ready to throw over the capitalist regime? What is the situation in the Mooney case now? Will they extradite Berkman to San Francisco?' and others, very difficult to answer, all delivered in a loud shout above the roaring

of the truck, while we held on to each other and danced amid the caroming bombs.¹¹

Occasionally a patrol tried to stop us. Soldiers ran out into the road before us, shouted '*Stoi!*' and threw up their guns.

We paid no attention. 'The devil take you' cried the Red Guards. 'We don't stop for anybody! We're the Red Guards!' And we thundered imperiously on, while Vladimir Nikolaevich bellowed to me about the imminent international social revolution, which Russia had begun, and which would soon sweep all nations of the world, and end the accursed war . . .

About five miles out we saw a company of sailors marching back, and slowed down.

'Where's the front, brothers?'

The foremost sailor halted and scratched his head. 'This morning,' he said, 'it was about half a kilometer down the road. But the damn thing isn't anywhere now. We walked and walked and walked, but we couldn't find it.'

They climbed into the truck, and we proceeded. It must have been two miles further that Vladimir Nikolaevich cocked his ear and suddenly shouted to the chauffeur to stop.

'Firing!' he said. 'Do you hear it?' For a moment dead silence, and then, a little ahead and to the left, three shots in rapid succession. Along here the side of the road was heavily wooded. Very much excited now, we crept along, speaking in whispers, until the truck was nearly opposite the place where the firing had come from. Descending, we spread out and every man carrying his rifle, went stealthily into the forest.

Two comrades, meanwhile, detached the cannon and slewed it around until it aimed as nearly as possible at our backs.

It was silent in the woods. The leaves were gone, and the tree-trunks were a pale wan color in the low, sickly autumn sun. Not a thing moved, except the ice of little woodland pools shivering under our feet. Was it an ambush?

We went uneventfully forward until the trees began to thin, and paused. Beyond, in a little clearing three soldiers sat around a small fire, perfectly oblivious.

Vladimir Nikolaevich stepped forward. '*Zdravstvuite* [Hello], comrades!' he greeted, while behind him one cannon, twenty rifles and a truck-load of *groubit* bombs hung by a hair. The soldiers scrambled to their feet.

‘What was the shooting going on around here?’

One of the soldiers answered, looking relieved. ‘Why we were just shooting a rabbit or two, comrade.’¹²

* * *

Kerensky was at Gatchina. The Cossacks were discontented. They had been beaten – and then, too, it seemed that all Russia was up against them, whereas, they had been told that Petrograd, rich Petrograd, would hold out welcoming arms. In this frame of mind ‘two truck-loads of orators’ descended upon their outposts. And toward nightfall arrived the redoubtable Dybenko, alone . . .

What Dybenko said no one knows, but the fact is that General Krasnov and his staff and several thousand Cossack troopers surrendered, and advised Kerensky to do the same.

General Krasnov advised Kerensky to go to Petrograd with an escort, proudly, as head of the Provisional Government, and deal face to face with the Bolsheviks in Smolny. If Kerensky had followed this advice, he might still have been a power in Russia. But instead, he promised to do so, and then disguised himself in a sailor’s uniform and ran away. And that was the end of Kerensky . . .

I went back to Petrograd riding on the front seat of an auto truck, driven by a workman, and filled with Red Guards. We had no kerosene, so our lights were not burning. The road was crowded with the proletarian army going home, and new reserves pouring out to take their places. Immense trucks like ours, columns of artillery, wagons, loomed up in the night, without lights, as we were. We hurtled furiously on, wrenched right and left to avoid collisions that seemed inevitable, scraping wheels, followed by the epithets of pedestrians.

Across the horizon spread the glittering lights of the capital, immeasurably more splendid by night than by day, like a low dike of jewels heaped on the barren plain.

The old workman who drove held the wheel in one hand, while with the other he swept the far-gleaming capital in an exultant gesture.

‘Mine!’ he cried, his face all alight. ‘All mine now! My Petrograd!’

NOTES

1. To exemplify the catch-as-catch-can nature of the government created on 8 November by the Bolsheviks, in *Ten Days* Reed mentioned Ryazanov, who humorously admitted knowing nothing about business, and Menzhinsky, Commissar of Finance, whom he saw sitting in a café in Smolny, 'anxiously figuring on a dirty envelope, and biting his pencil meanwhile' (p. 123).
2. 'Koslov' was actually Alexander Gumberg, a Russian-American who worked for various American agencies in Petrograd in 1917. In *Ten Days*, p. 182, he was renamed 'Trusishka' ('coward') and described as 'a Russian acquaintance'. Reed thoroughly disliked the cynical Gumberg, and the sentiment seems to have been warmly reciprocated. The account of Antonov's and Dybenko's trip to the front in Reed's article is only slightly modified in *Ten Days*, pp. 182-3. What Reed did not mention either here or in his book was that he, Albert Rhys Williams and Gumberg accompanied the leaders of the Military Revolutionary Committee on their journey. See James K. Libbey, *Alexander Gumberg and Soviet-American Relations 1917-1933* (Lexington, Ky, [1977]).
3. In *Ten Days*, p. 183, they arrived at Narvskaya Zastava, ten miles outside Petrograd.
4. He recounted the journey to Tsarskoe Selo in *Ten Days* pp. 183, 185-90, revising some details.
5. Changed to 'inside' in *Ten Days*, p. 189.
6. Changed to 'We did not believe that there would be any battle . . .' in *Ten Days*, p. 190.
7. Chapter 8 of *Ten Days* ('Counter-Revolution') begins with the arrival of the Cossacks at Tsarskoe Selo on 11 November 1917.
8. Reed described the *Brunnoviki* meeting at the Mikhailovsky Riding-School in *Ten Days*, pp. 159-63.
9. Reed had seen Slutskaya passionately denying slanders of the Bolsheviks at the City Duma on 9 November. When he visited the front at Pulkovo four days later, the site of her death was carefully pointed out to him (*Ten Days*, p. 165, 232).
10. This paragraph appears in *Ten Days*, p. 232, describing events which took place on 13 November, three days after Reed's first journey to the front as described here.
11. These questions were not innocently transcribed by Reed. Tom Mooney was convicted as the perpetrator of a bomb which exploded during the Preparedness Day parade in San Francisco in 1916. He was eventually pardoned in 1939. The American Ambassador in Petrograd, David R. Francis, believed that Reed and Shatov had deliberately and maliciously circulated in Petrograd the rumour that the anarchist Berkman, under arrest for speeches made opposing conscription, was to be extradited to California and possibly be executed. (In fact, he was deported to Russia in 1920.) Francis regarded Reed as a dangerous radical, and initiated systematic government surveillance of his activities. See David R. Francis, *Russia from the American Embassy April, 1916-November, 1918* (New York, 1921).

12. This anecdote appears unchanged in *Ten Days*, pp. 234–6. Reed changed the date of the incident thus changing the date of this journey (cf. note 10).

22

Memorandum to Colonel House on Intervention in Russia

My arrest and indictment by the Federal authorities because of a speech opposing Allied intervention in Russia raises a more important question than that of Russian intervention.¹ It directly involves the efficient conduct of the war by the Governments of the United States and of the Allies for the democratic aims proclaimed by President Wilson.

My point is that the American people are misinformed about conditions in Europe and especially in Russia, and that in the case of Russia, our Government is acting upon false information. Moreover, people who are in a position to inform the public concerning the Russian situation are either ordered to keep silent, or if they speak in public, arrested by the Department of Justice, and if they write in the press, barred from the mails by the Post Office Department.

In these conditions it is impossible for the public to form a clear opinion of the necessities of effective action abroad, and the sovereign American people cannot rightly dictate a democratic foreign policy to their servants in Congress and the White House.

The kind of Russian news usually fed the public, is illustrated by the frequent newspaper reports stating that the Soviet Government has fallen, that Lenin and Trotsky have fled to Germany and that chaos and anarchy are universal in Russia; statements which the very reports of the Allied commanders in Russia have demonstrated to be false, again and again.² An example of what I mean is the series of dispatches supported by no competent evidence, that thousands of people, especially foreigners, are being massacred by the Bolsheviki. The uncertainty of the newspapers themselves concerning the real situation in Russia was strikingly shown the other day, for example, by a story in the *New York Times* about the wholesale killing of British, French and Americans; which was

immediately followed by another item to the effect that arrangements have been completed by the Soviet Government and the Government of Finland for the safe conduct of all foreigners who wish to leave Russia.

The gravity of the situation is intensified by the recent release for publication by the Committee on Public Information of a series of documents pretending to prove that the leaders of the Russian Soviet Government were in the pay of the Imperial German Government, and that their actions were directed from Berlin. The fact is that the authenticity of many of these documents is so doubtful [that they were rejected by the French and British Foreign Offices as long ago as last spring. Even before that, some of the documents were in the hands of the Russian Provisional Government, whose Minister of Justice, Halpern, made them the basis of charges against the Bolshevik leaders arrested in July, 1917, among whom were Trotsky and Kamenev; but the evidence of their genuineness was so scanty that the Russian Government was forced to release the suspects without bail. Furthermore, the manner in which many of these documents were acquired by Mr Sisson in Petrograd calls into question the validity of the rest.]³ And lastly, the documents have been in the hands of the United States Government for more than six months. Why were they not given out before this time? Or more pertinently, why have they now been released? Was it to give color of excuse to an uninvited intervention in the affairs of a friendly people, and moreover, a people which had appealed to us for help against Germany?

There is definite evidence now in the United States sufficient, I believe, to prove that the leaders of the Soviets have not been pro-German, but on the contrary, if anything, pro-Ally. Strangely enough, this evidence is not allowed to reach the public. Colonel Raymond Robins, former chief of the American Red Cross Mission to Russia, and unofficial diplomatic agent of the United States Government in contact with the Russian Soviets, who has more information on the subject than any foreigner alive, has such evidence.⁴ So has Colonel William Boyce Thompson and Major Thomas Thacher – both of the Red Cross Mission. All these men have been ordered by the authorities to remain silent.

I, myself, and certain other Americans, who have had the opportunity to observe closely the character and actions of the Soviet Government, have been shut up by the simple expedient of taking away all documents and corroborative papers which we

brought back with us from Russia, on the pretext of 'examination'. Only those officials and correspondents who are opposed to the Soviets, for one reason or another, are allowed freely to speak or write their erroneous facts and their baseless opinions.

Besides these prejudiced observers, almost all the news sources concerning Russia are German sources, whose object it is to discredit the Soviet Government. For instance, the complete Russian version of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations has never been published in this country, although it is available; the American people must go to the version given out by Berlin, which was patently altered for both domestic and foreign consumption.

History will prove that, instead of plotting in the interest of Imperial Germany, the leaders of the Soviets attempted to enlist Allied aid in their hopeless resistance to the German advance. Some days before the ratification of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Soviet leaders summoned the American representatives, and made an offer of cooperation with the Allies, asking for supplies and technical assistance, stating definitely that if the aid were granted, the Soviets would refuse to ratify the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and that Russia would continue the war against Germany. This appeal was cabled to Washington, but never answered by the United States Government. And not only were the people of the United States kept in ignorance of this communication, but I am told that the President himself was not informed until long afterward, if at all.⁵

Similar offers of cooperation were made by the Soviets to [the] Governments of France and England, and either ignored or refused.

Five months later, without addressing those Soviet leaders with whom the Allied Governments had been in constant communication from November 1917, without making any complaint or any demands upon the responsible officials of the Russian Republic, the Allied troops invaded the territory of Russia, shot Russian citizens, and gave armed support to a series of 'governments' whose lack of popular backing was shown by their extreme instability; in sharp contrast to the Soviet Government, which, after ten months of 'unrecognized' existence, stands unchallenged by any effective Russian opposition.

Besides the questionable evidence adduced by the Committee on Public Information, is there any other adequate proof that the Soviet leaders were influenced by the German Government in word or act? The words of Lenin and Trotsky speak for themselves;

they are available to any American publication which desires to print them. Yet they are not, and have not been printed, except in Socialist papers of limited circulation. Their acts, too, may be known to any one who cares to read the authentic accounts of them. True, they have not always believed implicitly in the 'democratic' pronouncements of the Allied leaders; true, they do not admire our form of government; true, they have not, in the heat of a great revolution, been absolutely and unalterably consistent with their principles; true, the German government probably did all in its power to encourage the disintegration of Russia. But the point is that the Bolshevik Revolution was a revolution against all imperialism, German imperialism included; and the Soviet Government was, and still is, the most powerful menace to Imperial Germany, and all it implies, in the world; and the Russian leaders, whatever the Germans may have thought they would do, have consistently labored to break up the German power, and to reorganize Russia industrially and in a military way so as to turn again into open war the secret war they have been conducting so effectively.

I, myself, as well as several other Americans now in this country, can testify to this secret war and to its effects. I was employed by the Soviet Government, in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs.⁶ Among other things I assisted in the preparation of revolutionary propaganda to spread among the German troops and the German war-prisoners, and helped to get it to them. From the Commissariat we sent out every day more than half a million newspapers, in German, Hungarian, Polish, Croatian, Czechoslovak and other languages, besides translations in these languages, of the decrees and proclamations of the Soviet Government, and pamphlets of the revolutionary leaders; we sent speakers into the German lines to harangue the soldiers; we organized conventions of war-prisoner delegates, and dispatched hundreds of agitators to the prison camps. This propaganda was so effective that the German and Austrian Governments took the most energetic means to stamp it out, protesting and threatening, putting their troops under the most rigid control, and arranging 'quarantine camps' for returning prisoners, who were forced to remain isolated from their own people for several months, during which time they were thoroughly 'educated' by patriotic speeches and literature. It was so effective that when the time came to advance into Russia, many regiments refused to move and had to be replaced by other units drawn from the western front, where the soldiers were not 'con-

taminated'. It was so effective that tens of thousands of war-prisoners made application to become citizens of Soviet Russia, and thousands joined the Red Army, in whose ranks they resisted the advance of the German and Austrian armies as best they could.

The Brest-Litovsk peace brought Germany nothing from the Russia that remained. Neither food nor raw materials nor any rest from the flood of propaganda. The workers in factories manufacturing goods for Germany struck; so did the miners getting out ore and coal for Germany; so did the railway workers on trains carrying materials to Germany. Rather than let Germany have grain, the peasants burned their crops. And these are the same people who, election after election, in town after town, voted more and more for the representatives of the political parties which make up the Soviet Government. The Brest-Litovsk peace was never referred to by the Soviet leaders except as the 'Brigands' Peace', and never regarded by them except as workmen regard the settlement of a lost strike; as a respite in which to reorganize for another strike.

The outstanding and misunderstood fact of the matter is that the Soviet Republic, based on the dictatorship of the working-class, and the expropriation of the propertied classes, could not and cannot exist side by side with Imperial Germany; and even more so, Imperial Germany cannot hope to survive side by side with the Russian Soviets. It was to the interest of the Russian Soviets to enlist our aid in the destruction of their closest and most dangerous enemy. They attempted to do this – and we rejected their plea. But do not forget that it is also to the interest of Imperial Germany to prejudice the Allies against the Russian Soviets. And nothing can be so satisfactory to the Imperial German Government as Allied hostility to the Soviets, and Allied intervention in Russia, which is driving the Soviets, in sheer self-defense, desperately to seek an ally in Germany.

After all, the American people are entitled to know the real reasons for Allied intervention in Russia. The liberal European press – especially that of Great Britain – is outspoken in the opinion that it is dictated by the desire of the French Government to set up a Government in Russia which will guarantee the payment of Russian obligations, repudiated by the Soviets.

The American statement concerning intervention, justifies military action in Russia upon the grounds that the Czechoslovak troops, who were supposed to be leaving Russia by way of Siberia

to join the Allied armies on the western front – were attacked by ‘armed German and Austrian war-prisoners’.⁷

Several months ago that same story of ‘armed German and Austrian war-prisoners in Siberia’ reached Moscow, and at the request of Trotsky, members of the American and British military missions were given a special train to make an investigation of the charge. And they reported to their governments that the story was without foundation. Other observers tell the same tale.

It is true that these former German and Austrian deserters and prisoners, most of them International Socialists, many of whom laid down their lives in battle against Imperial Germany and Austria, are fighting in the ranks of the Soviet Army. The commander and most of the staff of the Soviet Army combating the Czechoslovaks in Siberia, are themselves Czechoslovaks.

As for the accusation that the Czechoslovaks were attacked by these mythical Teutons – there is no competent evidence to that effect from any disinterested quarter; and there is evidence that the Czechoslovaks themselves obstructed *unarmed* German and Austrian war-prisoners who were being returned to their homes under the treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

It is a fact that these Czechoslovaks were armed, equipped and given transportation across Siberia by order and permission of the Soviet Government, at the request of the Allied embassies, upon the understanding that they were to be transported to France to fight the Germans. On their way to Vladivostok, they marked their journey by upsetting local Soviet governments, and, in some cases, upholding the anti-Soviet elements while they massacred their political opponents. Those who arrived at Vladivostok executed an armed rising in that city, in which they overthrew the Soviet, killing almost all the defenders of the Soviet headquarters.

It was not until the Governments of Japan and the United States issued their statements, in the first week of August, that it was publicly admitted that the Czechoslovaks were ‘westward-moving’, and that it was the aim of the Allies to protect their ‘rear’, as well as to ‘guard military stores’ in the neighborhood of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk.

The statement of our Government was profuse in its professions of good-will toward the Russian people, and of entire disinterestedness.

‘In taking this action,’ it says, ‘the Government of the United States wishes to announce to the people of Russia in the most public and solemn manner that it contemplates no interference

with the political sovereignty of Russia, no intervention in her internal affairs – not even in the local affairs of the limited areas which her military forces may be obliged to occupy – and no impairment of her territorial integrity, either now or hereafter . . .’

The British Government is, however, more candid. Lloyd George speaks frankly of the Czechoslovaks as ‘the center of activities hostile to the Bolshevik Government’.

But whatever the phrasing of intention, the Governments of the Allies, our own included, stand sponsor to an expedition which has interfered with the political sovereignty of Russia, intervened in her internal affairs – even to the extent of supporting Governments hostile to the Soviet Government – and is considered by the Soviet Government to be waging war upon it.

With what aim? Merely to assist some sixty thousand Czechoslovaks in their efforts to reach France? Is it for this that tens of thousands of troops have been diverted from their needed stations on the western front and shipped around to the ends of the world? Our own press speaks of the ‘reconstitution of the eastern front’. But the American statement says specifically that ‘such military intervention as has been most frequently proposed, even supposing it to be efficacious in its ostensible object of delivering an attack upon Germany from the east’, would, in its judgment, be more likely to turn out to be merely a method of making use of Russia, than to be a method of saving her.

Were it reconstitution of the eastern front that is wanted, the Russians themselves were willing to accomplish that, but the Allies refused to accept their offer. No, the attitude of the official press of the Allied countries shows plainly, if the actions of Allied troops are not convincing enough, that the purpose of intervention in Russia is the overthrow of the Russian Soviet Republic. And in this adventure, against its expressly stated will, the Government of the United States finds itself involved.

The opportunity for such a perversion of purpose is found in the fifth paragraph of the statement:

No conclusion that the Government of the United States has arrived at in this important matter is intended, however, as an effort to restrict the notions or interfere with the independent judgment of the Governments with which we are now associated in the war.

Pertinent at this point is the controversy which, according to press dispatches, has arisen in Japan over the two versions of the Japanese statement on intervention. One version, for foreign consumption, says that a few thousand troops are to be dispatched to Vladivostok 'forthwith'; while the version published in Japan has it, a few thousand 'to begin with'.

A Tokyo dispatch of Tuesday, September 10th, is significant:

A contingent of Japanese cavalry, together with troops belonging to the command of General Semenov, the Cossack leader, entered the town of Chita, in the Transbaikal, on September 6th.

The formation of a Russo-Japanese economic organization for the commercial and industrial development of Siberia virtually has been completed. Russia is represented by twelve wealthy residents of Siberia and Japan by the Bank of Chosen, the Oriental Development Company and the Sino-Japanese Industrial Company. The organization will be capitalized at from 10,000,000 to 30,000,000 rubles.

I have charged that Allied representatives in Russia encouraged and supported counter-revolutionary movements in Russia. That is true, as it is also true that German agents have supported in similar counter-revolutionary attempts. From the days of the Kornilov attempt, at the end of August, 1917, when the British were involved, throughout the Kaledin movement, the separatist action of Ukraine and Finland, the 'revolts' of Semenov, Horvath, the Czechoslovaks, the 'Northern Government' headed by Chaikovsky, and all the little 'republics' set up by renegades and Tsarist officials – this has been true. Our Government alone had clean hands; our Government alone acted as if it intended really to be the 'friend of the Russian people' which President Wilson described it to be.

And the Russian people appreciated that fact; the Russian Soviet leaders trusted America; when repressive measures were taken against the citizens of other countries, Americans were privileged. Under direction of American diplomatic representatives, I myself have spoken with the Soviet leaders about cooperation with America, and I know what I am talking about. And I know, as I know myself, that this discrepancy between America's acts and America's words is destroying faith in America and hope in America, as

Russia's faith and hope in the other nations has been destroyed.

In June, the Czechoslovaks in Vladivostok, with the open cooperation of the British Consulate, executed a bloody *coup d'état*, shooting down unarmed workingmen on the streets, and jailing the members of the local Soviet. On the 4th of July twenty thousand workers marched in funeral procession, and laying down the rough unpainted coffins of their dead before the American Consulate, called upon America, on this the day of celebration of our freedom to recognize Russia's struggle for liberty.

It is a fact that certain of the Allied Governments recognized the anti-Bolshevik Governments in Finland and in the Ukraine, and loaned them money, and that these Governments then proceeded to call in German and Austrian troops to support them in power, and that as far as I know, the Allied Governments did not withdraw their recognition; even when, as in the case of Ukraine, a dictator was put in power by German bayonets; even when, as in the case of Finland, a German prince was called to the throne.⁸ It is a fact that in all the Allied capitals, in Washington as well, there are at present either official or unofficial representatives of these 'Germanized' Governments, who pursue their activities practically unmolested, while the representatives of the revolutionary Finnish and Russian Governments opposed to Germany are spied upon, hounded and jailed.

We are told daily that the Russian Soviet Government is crumbling, that the forces of the Czechoslovaks, the Allies and the Russian counter-revolutionists are victoriously advancing, that the 'insurgent' Governments of Northern Russia, of Eastern Siberia, of Samara, are rapidly attracting the support of the Russian masses. The truth is that these so-called 'Governments', composed of anti-Soviet elements, are absolutely unsupported except by the propertied classes and foreign bayonets; that cities like Vladivostok, which before Allied intervention, were anti-Bolshevik, have overwhelmingly voted the Bolsheviki into power; that the Soviet forces are every day growing stronger, and the resistance to the Allied and Czechoslovak advance more bitter. Maxim Gorky's acceptance of a post in the Soviet Cabinet⁹ and the return of Maria Spiridonova to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, are significant of the fact that all revolutionary Russia, the enemies as well as the friends of Bolshevism, are joining together to resist what they consider an unwarranted and ungenerous attack by the Allies upon Russia.

The conditions which produced Napoleon out of the French Revolution are being almost entirely duplicated in Russia today, except for the important difference that the Russian Government is not only revolutionary, but constructive, workable, and rooted in the hearts of a considerable section of the working-class of all countries. It is even possible that, instead of keeping a million German troops engaged in Russia, which might be done if the Allied Governments cooperated with the Soviet Government, continuance of our present policy in Russia will mean that by 1919 a million Allied troops will be so diverted from the western front.

Thousands of American fathers and mothers, sisters and wives and sweethearts, are going to want to know if the lives of their men shall be sacrificed in another and bitterer Gallipoli on the plains of revolutionary Russia.

Thousands of Americans who really believe in freedom will some day want to know why America joined with the enemies of freedom.

It is time that we know the truth about Russia. It is time we realized that instead of leading the liberal world, America is permitting to go abroad forces hostile to democracy, whose faces are set against the tides of history.

Edward M. House Papers, Yale University Library,
published (slightly abridged) in *The Liberator*,
November 1918

NOTES

This is the second memorandum on Russia which Reed sent to the US government. The first, written in May 1918, was forwarded by William C. Bullitt to Colonel House. No copy of this memorandum is known to survive. The accompanying letters appear in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, ed. A.S. Link *et al.*, vol. XLVIII: 13 May – 17 July 1918 (Princeton, NJ, 1985) pp. 144–5. See also Beatrice Farnsworth, *William C. Bullitt and the Soviet Union* (Bloomington, Ind., and London, 1967) pp. 24, 189 n. 48.

The present document was sent by Reed directly to House on 26 September 1918.

1. Reed was arrested on 14 September 1918 for a speech he had made the previous evening in which he denounced Allied military intervention in Russia.

2. The most substantial and damning analysis of press coverage of the Russian Revolution largely agreed with Reed. See Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz, 'A Test of the News', *New Republic*, 23 (supplement, 4 August 1920), pp. 1-42, which concentrated upon the *New York Times* reports between March 1917 and March 1920.
3. The passage in square brackets was deleted when this document appeared in *The Liberator*, November 1918. The Justice Minister of the Provisional Government responsible for these charges against the Bolsheviks in July 1917 was Pavel Nikolaevich Pereverzev, a lawyer and member of the PSR. Reed may be referring to I. Ya. Halpern, a Mason and lawyer, who was the last secretary of the Provisional Government.
4. See entries on Robins and Thompson in Biographical Notes. On his return to the United States in June 1918 Robins was instructed by the State Department to say nothing in public about his conversation with Trotsky on 5 March. His first public statement occurred when he testified before the Overman Committee of the Senate on 6 March 1919. Major Thomas D. Thacher, a New York lawyer, joined the Red Cross Mission as a member of Robins' staff.
5. In view of the refusal of the Central Powers to accept a peace 'without annexations and indemnities' at the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, Trotsky in January 1918 contemplated a resumption of hostilities. In a meeting with Robins Trotsky offered to re-enter the war on the side of the Allies in return for economic co-operation and military support.
6. See document 30.
7. The Czechoslovak Corps had been constituted from prisoners of war by the Tsarist government. After Brest-Litovsk the Bolsheviks agreed to allow the Corps to leave Russia via Vladivostok. *En route*, there were clashes between Czechoslovak troops and Hungarian prisoners-of-war. A joint Soviet-Allied decision to transfer part of the Corps via Arkhangelsk aroused the suspicion of the Czechoslovaks. Following a Soviet directive in May 1918 that the Corps be disarmed, the Czechoslovaks resolved to fight their way through Siberia. They occupied Vladivostok on 30 June. For a detailed account of this episode and of the co-operation between the Corps and the Whites, see William Henry Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution*, 2 vols (London, 1965), II, ch. xx.
8. The German-backed dictator was Hetman Skoropadsky (see document 15, note 1). Ludendorff's candidate for the throne of Finland was Prince Friedrich Karl of Hesse, brother-in-law of Kaiser Wilhelm II. See John Wheeler-Bennett, *Brest-Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace, March 1918* (London, 1966) p. 325.
9. Gorky did not accept a position in the Soviet government, but after the attempt on Lenin's life in 1918 he made his peace with the regime and worked to protect Russia's literary and artistic heritage and for the welfare of the intelligentsia. Demoralized by the Civil War, he left Russia in 1921, but he returned in 1928 and ultimately served as a propagandist of Stalinism.

23

Address to the Jacob Schwartz Memorial Meeting

25 October 1918

Comrades and friends: Tonight, as we sit here in this hall, our thoughts are with those boys and that girl, on their way to prison, sentenced to 20 years for the boys, and a fine and 15 years for the girl.

A VOICE: Shame!

SEVERAL VOICES: Hush! Hush!

Now, no such sentences as these, so far as I know, and I do know the European press pretty well, are imposed for offences such as these in any country in the world – not excluding Germany (*laughter*). Now comrades and friends, you know and I know that in these days, anybody that dares to speak for the people must look forward, and at least to the possibility of sentences like these, and I for one look forward to it if need be, and I shall not stop! (*great applause*)

History shows that Governments which are needlessly cruel and unnecessarily ruthless, sooner or later feel the wrath of their people. I shall say no more about that. (*laughter and hearty applause*)

'This is the life itself. This is the life itself,' – said Jacob Schwartz, as he died.¹ Comrades, I feel, and have felt for a long time that this is life – that it is the only life, to be in some way helping the cause of the people – that there is no other life, and that all opposition to us is death (*applause*). The only life is in the warm blood of the Proletariat, which will mount and wash the world clean! (*Great applause*) – and soon!

One sentence I will tell you, and take it home and think about it, and dream about it: The Russian Soviet Republic is winning! The Russian Soviet Republic has won! Socialism is safe! (*Hurrah! Tremendous and prolonged applause*)

On the night of October 30, – that is to say, I believe in quick calculation November 10, 1917 – Kerensky's Cossack forces had advanced behind Gatchina upon Petrograd. At noon Smolny Institute sent word: 'Loose the full power of the Proletariat!' The whistles of all the factories blew, and on this day – on the 10th, – the great working class quarters and the slums of Petrograd began to vomit out their hundreds of thousands – men, women and children – some with guns, some with spades, some with axes, and the little children carrying sacks to fill with earth to make barricades against the Cossacks. (*applause*) During the night of November 10 to 11, the Proletariat, the unled, the leaderless, the unorganized Proletariat, met at Pulkovo the advance of the Cossacks and met the shock of trained troops and artillery, and rolled and poured over barricades and obliterated the Cossacks!² (*applause*)

They did not do it without loss. Many men – many women, rushing artillery on foot, rushing the Cossacks on foot with their swords and pulling the Cossacks from their horses, were killed.

In Petrograd, I was on the street at one o'clock in the morning, when the second bulletin of the Military Revolutionary Committee came in with a telegram by Trotsky saying that all was going well. At five o'clock in the morning, after the battle was won, I went to Smolny Institute and I could not pick my way through the corridors or through the rooms, for the Red Guards who were lying exhausted, sleeping there, some wounded and some just plain tired out.

And on the floor – looking around, on the floor I found a proclamation. It was Bulletin No. 2 from the Military Revolutionary Committee, containing Trotsky's telegram. Someone had taken that and on the back he had written the list of his friends who had died in the night battle, and below it he had written a poem, and the poem was blotted with his tears. And I have that proclamation as it fell on the floor, and after he had written it, he probably collapsed on the floor and slept, and I picked it up, and I read this poem. And when I read this poem that he wrote to those members of the Proletariat army who fell in the first battle of the International Social Revolution – when I read this poem, I want you to apply it to Jacob Schwartz, who fell in the fight as well as any of them. And this is the poem:

Sleep, warrior eagles!
Sleep with peaceful soul.

You have deserved your own happiness
and eternal peace,
Under the earth of the grave.
You have straightly closed your ranks.
Sleep, citizens!³

(LOUD AND PROLONGED APPLAUSE)

MSS. Coll. 67, Box 1, Alexander Berkman Papers,
Tamiment Library, New York University

NOTES

1. Schwartz died during the course of his trial for distributing leaflets against American military intervention in Russia.
2. Reed described this scene in ' "Kerensky is Coming!" ' (document 22) and returned to it in *Ten Days*, pp. 181–2.
3. See *Ten Days*, pp. 222–3.

24

Letter to Upton Sinclair

Harvard Club, New York
November 6, 1918

Dear Upton –

I have your letter of October 22. No, I hadn't the slightest idea you were going to publish my letter; if I had, I should probably have taken more pains with it. But then, I don't care, not feeling that anything I say has enough importance to make misquotation dangerous.

Your article about Russia seems altogether reactionary and wrong to me.

You hurl Peter Kropotkin at me. (At first, when you were describing him, I took him for Lenin!) There is nothing particularly intricate in the puzzle of Peter Kropotkin. No revolution ever bore the impress of one man's philosophy as the Bolshevik Revolution bears the impress of Kropotkin's. He rejected the Russian Revolution because he thought it might hinder the crushing of Germany. Besides that, however, and more important, Kropotkin is an old man, and all the old leaders were disappointed with the Revolution. When you were hailing it in California, they were deploring it in Petrograd – Babushka, Chaikovsky, Kropotkin. If Kropotkin is in jail, it is only because he is suspected with pretty good reason of plotting with the English against the Soviets. If you yourself were to see the old man, and especially his entourage, and his daughter – the air of upper middle class British atmosphere which surrounds him, – you might understand something of his attitude toward the Revolution.¹

The thing you do not seem to realize, Upton, is that all the palliative measures you suggest were tried. The first eight months of the Russian Revolution were a sort of laboratory demonstration of the evils and failures of capitalism. Kerensky's 'moderate' Government was unable to 'break the resistance of the bourgeoisie'; the bourgeoisie in the Cabinet refused to consent to the mildest and most necessary reforms; the Russian bourgeoisie acted

as if it had stepped from the pages of the *Appeal to Reason* (old style).² It acted like the villain in a melodrama; it did not hesitate to lock out factories, cause deliberate defeat on the front, send delegations whose function was to bore holes in the boilers of locomotives. All in order to destroy the democratic organizations born of the revolution. The Russian bourgeoisie was determined, at the end of the first three months, that capitalism in its most malignant form should be established on the soil of Russia. For this end it did not hesitate to call in the Germans, where it could, in Finland and the Ukraine, unloose the Cossacks on the peasantry, and summon Kornilov to Petrograd. This is the kind of thing which Kropotkin's logic compelled him to tolerate.

The Bolshevik dictatorship of the proletariat was born of these conditions, compelled by them; just as socialism is born of Capitalism, compelled by it. What was the difference between exposing 'a revolutionary nation to a ruthless militarist nation like Germany', and to a band of robbers of Russian origin? These outward wars, *on whatever pretext*, do not matter; only the inner war matters . . . So much for that.

You would have had the Russians restore the peasants to the land at once. This the moderate Socialists tried to do, and the ruling class would not permit it. You would have had the Russian Socialist Government wait until it could influence the rise of Socialism throughout Europe, by being cautious, by jockeying itself into a position of power through compromise with the bourgeois liberal governments of Europe. My dear Upton, at the height of Kerensky's power, when the Russian Government was trying to do just that, the Governments of England and France were trying with all their might to overthrow this Russian Government; they were backing Ukrainian separatists, Finnish bourgeois, and lending Kornilov the aid of their troops to march against Petrograd. The Russians could not wait. If the Bolsheviks had not taken over the power, the Kerensky Government would have fallen just the same, as it did, and become the undisputed prey of both Germans and Allies. Russia could not, dared not, wait.

You would have done this, you would have done that. You are simply a theoretician, Upton; these Russians are practical. This is life, in Russia; life according to Karl Marx. Look at your Europe today and then tell me again that the Russian Soviet Revolution has been a 'hindrance'. It is time that the Socialist movement got cleared out of the Scheidemanns, – nay, of the Kautsky's; of all

those people who either consciously or unconsciously believe that parliamentarism is practical, and that Socialist leaders can be respectable, or even magnanimous. Bolshevism is not for intellectuals; it is for the people. In Europe we have the spectacle of all the Social Democracies getting together to prevent a proletarian revolution. And we are going to have a proletarian revolution just the same, Upton! The intellectuals (so-called) do not belong; let them go back to the class which trained them, and to which in the end, their hearts beat true.

This is incoherent, maybe. I am just writing along, as I think. You can read it that way. The point I want to emphasize is that liberal Europe is fighting Germany to get rid of 'Militarism'; but it would fight Germany just as hard (and indeed, is already showing signs of doing so), to destroy Bolshevism. And foremost in that latter fight are the social-patriots of Europe and America . . .

You are right in your opinion that the crux of your disagreement, not only with your friends, but with all real Socialists, is your classification of western capitalism above German capitalism. 'The Beast with the Brains of an Engineer', you call your pet aversion; I do not see why you do not go further and call other states 'Beasts with the Brains of a Jesuit'. All beasts; the quality of their brains immaterial. You speak of 'feudal', as if actually you thought the German directors inspired by feudal ideology. Our own directors, in that case, can be said to be inspired by Jeffersonian ideology. How ridiculous! Berlin-to-Baghdad, Mittel-Europa, pro and con, the exploitation of Siberia, a place in the sun, Bolshevism, the French loan, freedom of the seas . . . Ideologies are for ignorant mobs, like religion. The German Government is no more irresponsible than our own, or England's.

You say that in the western democracies, whenever the people are ready to change the Government, they can change it. You do not and will not see that the ruling classes everywhere, whether bound by constitutions or not, will not permit the change of Governments when it touches their property, will resist this change with arms. If you think that what happened to the I. W. W. in this country, what is happening to the Socialist party, is because they opposed the war, you are simply fooled . . . Even in Russia, in full flux of Revolution, with universal freedom of speech, assembly and vote, the democratic elements of the population could not assure a single one of the petty reforms they wanted without overthrowing the Ministry by force. Five times they did it, and

finally got tired of such infinitesimal progress, and went the only way.

You describe us as a bunch of musicians sitting down to play a symphony-concert in a forest where there is a man-eating tiger. One man-eating tiger, Germany! This tiger must be shot before you, for one, can enjoy the concert . . .

This is like that other hoary parable of the house on fire, and the primal necessity of putting out the fire. The house doesn't belong to us. If we put out the fire we will be slammed back in the cellar with hand-cuffs on our feet, – where we were before. No sir. If you want me to put out the fire in your house, you get out; I'll put out the fire only when it's my house. Otherwise, it were better that the house burned to the ground; then I, being a worker, can rebuild the house – and you, being an owner, will have to go to work with me or sleep on the ground.

To you, Upton, there is only one tiger in the forest. To me there is a whole flock of tigers – the tiger who eats me and the tigers who eat other people. These tigers are fighting, and which ever side wins, I get eaten just the same. Under those circumstances it is a bit heartless to imagine any of us, at any time, playing symphony concerts. I have been around a bit, like you, in Colorado, Bayonne, Lawrence, and on the battle-fields of Europe. I have yet to see the world's working-class playing symphony-concerts – but I hope to see them, sitting on the carcasses of those tigers.

Yours very sincerely
John Reed

Upton Sinclair Papers, Lilly Library, Indiana University
(published in *Upton Sinclair's*, December 1918)

NOTES

1. On 'Babushka' (Ekaterina Konstantinovna Breshko-Breshkovskaya), Chaikovsky and Kropotkin, see Biographical Notes. After the suppression of his Federalist League in the spring of 1918, Kropotkin had been forced to reside in Dmitrov, a small village 40 miles north of Moscow. Though he had supported the Entente, and had condemned the Bolshevik Revolution as 'Jacobin', the allegations, which Reed accepted, that he conspired with the English against the Revolution are

- without foundation. The 'Englishness' of the Kropotkins 'was the subject of much conversation and not a little resentment among the peasant delegates' at the Democratic Conference in September 1917 – Louise Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia* (London, n.d.) p. 57. Emma Goldman visited Kropotkin in March 1920, and gave in *My Disillusionment in Russia* (Garden City, NY, 1923) an account of his circumstances and attitudes towards the Soviets which differed greatly from Reed's.
2. *The Appeal to Reason* was a socialist weekly newspaper published by J.A. Wayland in Girard, Kansas, from 1895 to 1922. It achieved a larger paid circulation than any other socialist publication in the United States. In 1917 the paper's name was changed to *The New Appeal* and its links with the Socialist Party were ended. The paper had pursued a moderate socialist line, but on American entry into the war in April 1917 it rejected the Socialist Party's opposition to the war. See John Graham (ed.), *Yours for the Revolution: 'The Appeal to Reason', 1895–1922* (Lincoln, Neb., 1989).

25

The Second Day

The meeting place of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, is the former ballroom and reception hall, of Smolny Institute under the old regime a famous convent-school for the daughters of the Russian nobility, patronized by the Tsar himself. A great white room, with two rows of massive columns, lighted by a pair of glazed-white chandeliers holding hundreds of ornate electric bulbs; at one end a dais, with two tall many-branched light-standards, and a great gold frame behind, from which the Imperial portrait has been cut. Here on graduation days and festival days had been banked brilliant military and ecclesiastical uniforms, a setting for some Grand Duchess . . .

A thousand chairs are ranked in the space between the columns. Most of the delegates are in the uniform of private soldiers. The rest wear the plain black blouse of the Russian workers, with a few colored peasant blouses. A few women. Rarely gleam the gold and red epaulettes of an officer, and an occasional white collar. All around, in the spaces between the columns, on the window-ledge, massed on the steps of the stage and on its edge, are the public – also common workers, common peasants, and common soldiers. Bayonets bristle among them. Exhausted Red Guards, girdled with cartridge-belts, sleep at the base of the columns.

There is no heat but the animal heat of bodies, which stand in hoar frost on the panes of the long windows. The air is blue with cigarette-smoke and breath.

Through this hundreds of faces are lifted in the direction of the stage, at whose back is bunched a cluster of red banners, lettered in gold. Flat, simple faces, unconscious and determined, faces tanned almost black with exposure in winter trenches, wide-set eyes, great beards – or perhaps the thin, hawk-like faces of Caucasians, or of Asiatics from Turkestan – and many with the sparse mustaches of Tatars . . . All these faces turned one way, with an expression of unsophisticated and child-like interest. No self-consciousness visible, and apparently no thought that what is being done is in any

way unique; just the look of peasants intensely concerned with a new and wonderful harvest . . .

The session was called for six o'clock in the evening, but it is now ten and the meeting is not yet opened.

It is November 7, the second day of the Bolshevik insurrection. The Land Decree has been passed, the Winter Palace taken. In the hall of the City Duma the counter-revolutionary forces are gathering – Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, as well as Cadets, Monarchists, the Union of Officers. Kaledin is reported to be on the move north, and Kerensky is marching from the front with five Cossack Divisions . . .

At the press table sits a well-dressed, attractive young intellectual, a Russian Jew, a follower of Kropotkin, who has been exiled in Paris for many years. He observes the crude, intense assembly with amused detachment, making witty remarks. It is incredible to him that these rough and ignorant people should think that they can rule great Russia.

'Come,' he says to me, in French, 'I am bored. Let us appoint ourselves a committee to go and find the presidium, so that the show can start.' As we go out, he adds, 'Not that there is any particular hurry. These animals will be running for their lives in forty-eight hours.'

Now, twelve months later, this remark comes often to my mind.

We go through the dimly lit vaulted corridors, thronged with the huge, hurrying shapes of workers and soldiers, and bitterly cold. To right and left are doors, placarded with the innumerable activities of the Soviets: International Section, Soldiers' Section, Office of the *Izvestiya*, Literature and Publication, Union of Democratic Military Men, Professional Unions, Factory Shop Committees, and the headquarters of the different political parties. Through the door of room 28, where the Left Socialist Revolutionaries were in session, rages mass-debate; the door is locked. Room 18, on the first floor, is the 'Lenin Section'; a close-packed throng of several hundred Bolsheviks intently listening to Trotsky. Nobody seems to care whether we enter or not. Trotsky is saying, 'Do not falter. Do not give way. When they ask to compromise, it is because they know the power is in our hands. If we need them, why then remember, comrades, when we shall have won, they will crawl at our feet!' Inquiries as to when the meeting would be over are met with

impatient shrugs. There is a feeling of exaltation, of effort keyed up and triumphant. Men look as if they have not slept for weeks, but their eyes burn.

On the top floor in a little room the Military Revolutionary Committee sits sleeplessly, the center of far-flung insurrection. Couriers come running, couriers burst out, running. A deep, determined humming sounds from that room. We send in to find out if the presidium is there. As we wait my friend the anarchist explains his position.

'I am a follower of Kropotkin, yes. This is no time for a revolution.

'There are no people to run a revolution. Why, the *intelligentsia* is against them! . . . How dirty they are! How ignorant! What will Europe think of us?'

The door opened and a figure comes out, a squat man with short bow-legs and a long trunk; wide face, mouth appearing to smile, straggly beard and young eyes and forehead; dirty, unkempt, drunk with loss of sleep; a plain uniform, with the insignia of an officer student, and the red-white-and-blue cord of a volunteer.

'Krylenko!' says my friend, with a smile, and comes forward, holding out his hand and calling him by name. Krylenko, in a few hours to be Commander-in-Chief of all the Russian armies, looks at him keenly.

'Don't you remember me?' asks the follower of Kropotkin. 'I am André Pavlovitch. We were together in Minsk prison . . .'

'Oh yes,' answers Krylenko, with a pleasant smile, taking his hand.

We go down the hall toward the meeting room. My companion is still complacently critical. 'No finesse, no sense of the dramatic,' he keeps saying. 'How uncultivated we Russians are. Just savages. We shall be laughed at in Europe.'¹

* * *

Now the Left Socialist Revolutionaries were come, weary but excited – Kamkov, Maria Spiridonova, Karelin.² Kalegaev in the lead. In a moment the Bolsheviki, all crowded around Lenin – Zinoviev, Kamenev, Chudnovsky, Volodarsky; Ryazanov a bitterly objecting minority of one. Then the presidium mounted the stage – these with Alexandra Kollontai, Martov for the Menshevik-Internationalists, Trotsky, a scattering of Mensheviks, Socialist-

Revolutionaries, Abramovich for the *Bund*. Kramarov temporarily for the *Novaya Zhizn* group.

Kamenev presides. He reads the order of business, which was drawn up, as usual, by the presidium. This night the assembly is to take up the questions of War and Peace, the creation of a Government, the defense of the capital against Kerensky. But of course the order of business is only sketchily followed. The great debates, in which anyone may be heard, are broken into by all sorts of speakers on extraneous matters; by soldier delegates with greetings from their regiments at the front; by officers and *intelligentsia* protesting against the uprising; by wealthy peasants who have come to curse the Bolsheviki for arresting Minister Malyantovich – 'He too is a Socialist.'³ A member of the Central Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union brings word that he and his men will oppose the Bolsheviki with all their power.

Bitterly, furiously, the representatives of the other political parties, even the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, protest against the arbitrary actions of the Bolsheviki. Karelin tells how the Red Guards have seized their printing shop and closed their paper, *Znanya Truda*. The *Bund* delegates again publicly 'leave this assembly of traitors'.

All night long the audience roars and stamps its applause and its anger; the hall tosses like a stormy sea. Motions are made to limit speeches to fifteen minutes, to half an hour, to an hour, to three hours, and are voted down. The delegates of the other parties protest against the make-up of the presidium, alleging that the overwhelming Bolshevik 'fraction' should not insist upon dictating the whole course of the Congress, but ought to be more generous – to allow the voice of the minority to be heard. Trotsky responds, in a voice like polished steel, 'When we Bolsheviks were a minority party last July, and begged you for generosity, you did not listen. Nor will we listen to you now. Your purpose is to halt the triumphant march of the proletarian revolution – and the proletarian revolution *shall not be halted*.'

It is a smooth 'steam-roller' that the Bolsheviki have set in motion. In Russian political meetings all the real work is done outside the hall, in the caucuses of the different 'fractions'. The Bolsheviki are in the majority. They cannot check the voice of the minority; there are no rules by which debate can be closed. But they have resolved upon an insurrection of the masses of the people; they know that the Petrograd masses are behind them;

they believe that all Russia is behind them; and they drive ahead, ruthless and sure.

It is after midnight. Lenin, in a calm, monotonous voice, is reading his appeal to the peoples of all the belligerent nations for armistice and peace. The audience listened intensely, and the sweat stands out on their foreheads as they listen, so terribly do they will it.

He ceases. Protests come, a few met with ugly growls and shouts of 'Enough! Shut up!' A vote. Even the 'moderates' – the Left Socialist Revolutionaries and the *Novaya Zhizn* group – are in favor. There is only one objector. A storm of rage and laughter compels him to lower his hand.

Simultaneously, with one thought, without a word, we are on our feet, all of us, singing the *Internationale*. It bursts up through the cloudy air, penetrates the walls, the windows, and goes soaring out into the world at war.

Men embrace each other; tears run down rough, bearded faces; a deep exaltation shakes us. Peace! Peace and a people's world to all mankind. The beginning of the general revolutions, the end of unhappiness, the birth of a world!⁴

'And let us not forget those who have died for this night!' cries a voice, when the last notes have died away.

Then we sing the Funeral Song of the Martyrs, that solemnly joyous hymn that means so much to every Russian. A profound conviction seizes us that this is not merely an emotional demonstration, but the sublimation of real political power. Do we feel that the people have won? Hear Lenin: 'The Revolution is only just begun. Now we have conquered Petrograd. Tomorrow we shall conquer Kerensky. The day after tomorrow we shall break the resistance of the bourgeoisie. And then, comrades, we shall begin the Revolution . . .'

Hear Trotsky: 'And now, to work, comrades. Everything must be done – everything. There is a new world to build. It has taken untold centuries to build this one. We must build ours in a few days.'

The new Government is proclaimed, a 'Government based on the Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Soviets'. The Council of People's Commissars is named from the tribune, each name being greeted with applause appropriate to its revolutionary associations; Trotsky's calls forth sharp, tumultuous cheering – the response to Lenin's is thunderous and steady. But the proclamation of the new Government, which in the West would be the

climax of Revolution, is here received in a matter-of-fact way. Here the crowd is ruler. Men do not matter; only the Revolution matters. Were Lenin and Trotsky for one moment to fail to interpret the will of the crowd, they would be swept into oblivion, as Kerensky was, as, for example, Ryazanov was to be . . .

It is after five o'clock in the morning when we leave. In the more southern lands dawn would be paling the eastern sky; here for four hours yet it will be black night. Snow has not yet fallen, but the black mud of the streets has frozen rigid. At the corners squat little groups of Red Guards around brightly-flaming bonfires. They call to us, *Da zdravstvuyet svobodnaya Rossiya!* ['Long live free Russia!'], their eyes shine, and their voices are full of inexhaustible excitement.

Street-cars are waiting to take us down-town. Long ago, at eleven in the evening, the car-service in the streets of Petrograd has stopped; but the Street-Railwaymen's Union sends cars which shall wait at Smolny until the Soviet breaks up, manned by volunteers. We pile in, still gesticulating, discussing . . .

From afar comes the sound of a few casual shots. Behind us as we go great Smolny, all ablaze with lights, hums like a hive . . .

One Year of Revolution: Celebrating the First Anniversary of the Founding of the Russian Soviet Republic . . . November 7, 1918

(Brooklyn, NY, 1918)

NOTES

This is an early version of *Ten Days*, ch. 5, which describes the events of 8 November. Some of the details included here appear in *Ten Days* as occurring on the previous night, 7–8 November.

1. Reed added a subdued joke by Krylenko to his account of this meeting in *Ten Days*, pp. 124–5, and toned down some of the anarchist's bitter comments.
2. Here and below Reed identifies Karelin as belonging to the Left PSR. Apollon Andreevich Karelin, alias Kochegarov (1863–1926), was an anarchist–communist leader of the Petrograd Federation of Anarchist Groups. By 1918 he had decided that the Soviet regime represented a necessary stage in the transition to anarchism and had founded the All-Russian Federation of Anarchists.
3. The Menshevik Pavel Nikolaevich Malyantovich had been Minister of Justice in the Provisional Government from early October 1917.
4. Reed omits here the touching detail, provided in *Ten Days*, p. 132: 'Alexandra Kollontai rapidly winked tears back'.

26

The Constituent Assembly in Russia

At five minutes past four o'clock on the morning of January 19, 1918, while President Chernov of the first Russian Constituent Assembly¹ was reading aloud the project of fundamental principles of the agrarian law, a sailor stepped up to the tribune and touched him on the shoulder. Pointing to the empty seats of the Bolsheviks and the Left Social-Revolutionists, he said calmly:

'You fellows had better go home. The rest have gone. It's very late and the guard is tired.'

Half an hour later, having passed a resolution calling for immediate peace, a law confiscating landed property, and declaring Russia to be a democratic federative republic, the Constituent Assembly adjourned, nevermore to meet – in this or any other world.

So ended the historic session of what was probably the most democratically-elected governing body the world has ever seen. Out of about five hundred delegates present only 170 were Bolsheviks, and some 40 Left Social Revolutionists – while the rest, about 250 Social Revolutionists of the right and center, 10 Cadets, half a dozen Mensheviks and United Social Democrats (Gorky's party), and the rest Mussulmen, Jews, Ukrainians, Estonians, Letts, etc., can roughly [be] characterized as 'anti-Bolshevik'. Did this not show that Russia, after two months of Bolshevism, rejected the party and policies of the Council of People's Commissars? No, its significance was much greater; it demonstrated conclusively and forever the impotence of the old-time political state as an expression of the will of the majority.

The next day the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviets met at Smolny and passed the following resolution, which I quote at some length because it explains the feeling behind the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly:

The Russian revolution, since its inception, has put forward the Soviets of Workmen's, Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies as the

means of organization of all the laboring and exploited classes which alone can direct the struggle of these classes for their complete economic and political liberation.

During all the first period of the Russian revolution, the Soviets multiplied, grew and expanded, realizing by their own experience the emptiness of all illusions about a conciliation with the bourgeoisie, and the vanity of all forms of bourgeois-parliamentary democracy; and they have finally come to the conclusion that it is impossible to emancipate the oppressed classes without breaking completely with these forms, and with all conciliations of any kind. This rupture was realized by the November revolution, and the transfer of all power into the hands of the Soviets.

The Constituent Assembly, elected upon the basis of electoral lists which were drawn up before the November revolution, is the expression of the old-time political relations between Cadets and the conciliators then in power.

For example, the people could not, while voting for the candidates of the Socialist Revolutionary party, distinguish between the S. R. right and center, ally of the bourgeoisie, and the left S. R., partisans of socialism. In this fashion the Constituent, which was to have been the crown of the bourgeois-parliamentary republic, could not but become an obstacle in the way of the November revolution and the Soviet power. Because it gave the power to the Soviets, and through them, to the laboring and exploited classes, the November revolution provoked a desperate resistance on the part of the exploiters, and in the crushing of this resistance, the November revolution manifested itself plainly as the beginning of the social revolution.

The working-class was forced to convince itself by experience that bourgeois parliamentarism had outlived its usefulness, that it was absolutely incompatible with the realization of Socialism, – that not national institutions, but only class institutions are powerful enough to break the resistance of the propertied classes and lay the foundation of Socialist society.

All restriction of the power of the Soviets, power conquered by the people of the Republic of Soviets, in favor of bourgeois parliamentarism and the Constituent, would be now a step backward and signify the failure of the entire workers' and peasants' revolution of November.

Opened the 18th of January, the Constituent, because of

well-known circumstances, gave the majority to the party of the right Social Revolutionists, the party of Kerensky, of Avksentiev and of Chernov. Naturally this party refused to examine the proposition made by the supreme organ of the Soviet power, a proposition clear, precise and admitting no equivocation, to adopt the 'Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People', to recognize the November revolution and the Soviet power. By that refusal the Constituent broke all bonds with the Russian Soviet Republic. Therefore, inevitably, the Bolsheviks and the Left Social Revolutionists must withdraw from such a Constituent, forming as they do at present an immense majority in the Soviets and possessing the confidence of the workers and most of the peasants.

Outside of the Constituent the parties of the majority of this Assembly, the right S. R. and the Mensheviks, carry on an open war against the power of the Soviets, inciting in their organs the people to overturn this power, and by that fact aiding the resistance of the exploiters to the transfer of the land and the factories into the hands of the workers.

It is clear that the part of the Constituent which remains can only play the part of screen to the attempt of the bourgeois counter-revolution to destroy the power of the Soviets.

In consequence, it is resolved by the Central Executive Committee:

That the Constituent Assembly be dissolved.

What happened? Did Russia attempt to rise in revolt? Was there an outcry? The only audible protest came from the *London Times*, the *Paris Temps*, the *New York Herald*, and Gustave Hervé. There was no revolt in Russia; on the contrary, a sort of immense sigh of relief swept the country, and the Cossacks finally began to turn against Kaledin. As for the members of the dissolved Constituent, for a few days they muttered angry plans to meet illegally in Finland or the Don and raise the banner of rebellion; but to their intense astonishment they found that the masses of people accepted the dissolution with perfect calm, – even forgot it entirely, and turned their attention to the Third Congress of All-Russian Soviets, which assembled in the seats of the Constituent Assembly five days later, and declared Russia forever the property of the toiling masses, a republic of Soviets, the invincible sword of the social revolution . . . while two bands played the *Internationale* and

the *Marseillaise* simultaneously, and seven hundred big bearded workers and peasants kissed each other with tears rolling down their cheeks.

So ended the last act of the battle between the Russian bourgeoisie and proletariat, between the Soviets and the Constituent, between parliamentary democracy and – something new.

It will be objected that the Soviets are only a new form of parliamentary democracy, much like the primitive Anglo-Saxon 'town meeting'. But, as a matter of fact, the Soviet is a new invention. In the first place it consists of delegates elected by small units of the working population, with the property-holding classes excluded. Meeting frequently, its members can be recalled and replaced by their constituents at any time, and so the entire complexion of the local Soviets, and through them, the central Soviets, must change automatically with the change of mass opinion, which is particularly sensitive in time of revolution. Then consider the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which meets at least every three months, and oftener if any special question demands it; with such a machinery of government a new Constituent Assembly of all Russia is held four times a year. And the authority of the small Soviets is not delegated to the larger Soviets, but like them, based on the direct vote of the peasants in their fields, the workmen in their factories and the soldiers in barracks and trenches.

Now in the course of the Russian revolution, which in the short space of eight months lived through almost every known form of government, the Soviets, which were founded in order to defend the interests of the proletariat in the building of new Russia, learned by experience what it has taken the working class of the world a hundred years to begin to see – that the modern constitutional democratic state is based on a civil war of the classes. In the beginning the Soviets acquiesced in the bourgeois government, themselves playing the part of a sort of democratic threat over the heads of the Ministers.

The Russian masses had three imperative wants – peace, land, and some sort of workers' co-operation in the management of industry. As yet, however, these three demands were expressed by the Soviets in the form of: general peace in conjunction with the Allies; settlement of the land question at the Constituent Assembly; and a sort of government supervision of industry. The great majority of the Soviets was Menshevik and right Social Revolutionary – that is to say,

'moderate Socialist'. During the first three months of the Revolution the philosophy of the Russian democracy may be roughly summarized in the following formula:

'The social revolution is impossible. First, the Russian proletariat is not prepared; second, a Socialist Russia cannot exist in the midst of a capitalistic Europe.'

Before the coalition of the Soviet leaders with the bourgeois leaders, the Soviets had emphasized the clearly-expressed will of the Russian masses, peace, land, industrial democracy. But now consider what happened. The 'Socialist' ministers found themselves absolutely unable to carry on their class war against the bourgeois ministers in the Government. Whenever democratic proposals were brought forward, the bourgeois ministers threatened to resign, passively resisted, delayed, postponed. Chernov, Socialist Minister of Agriculture, was unable to get adopted the mildest measure of a whole series of land reforms – the law relating to the valuation of real property; he was finally forced to sit quietly by and allow the arrest of the peasant Land Committees, which had been formed at the request of the first Provisional Government itself. Skobelev, Minister of Labor, was unable to persuade the rest of the Cabinet to sanction his program for the participation of the labor unions in the administration of factories, and was finally bullied into attempting to restrict the growing influence of the Factory Shop Committees. Tsereteli himself when the Kronstadt workmen and sailors deposed a tyrannical government commissar and elected one of their own was persuaded to go to Kronstadt, and in the name of the Soviets restore the previous commissar. Kerensky, threatened not only by the hostility of the Russian bourgeois government, but also by the bourgeois governments of the Allies, and especially the United States, forced upon the war-weary Russian army the great offensive of July, which crumbled into ghastly disaster at Tarnopol.

Meanwhile the Russian bourgeoisie inaugurated a plan of deliberate sabotage in factories, mines, farms, railroads. In an interview with one of the great financiers of Russia, Stepan Lyanozov, I was told with amazing frankness how the propertied classes were 'starving the Revolution'; coal mines were flooded, factory machinery wrecked and the shops closed down, railroads were disorganized.² In the army the officer class was also working to destroy the soldiers' committees and Soviets, and restore the old-fashioned autocratic discipline so fatal to revolutionary thought. Through the

complacency of Kerensky the death penalty was re-introduced – and applied to political agitators of the left wing; socialist newspapers were shut down; and military defeat was brought about. Besides many other proofs in my possession, I publish herewith one of the secret documents discovered in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which sheds a bright light on the fall of Riga:

Baron Faschiatti to Baron Sonnino at Rome. Jassy, August 22 – September 4, 1917.

Diamandi has telegraphed to Bratiano (Rumanian premier) from the Stavka, where he is for the moment, using the direct wire between Stavka and the Russian command in Rumania, for the purpose of transmitting his conversation with General Kornilov. The General told him that he should not attach great importance to the fall of Riga. The General added that the troops abandoned Riga on his orders . . . General Kornilov counts also on the impression which the fall of Riga will produce upon public opinion, to the end of the immediate re-establishment of discipline in the Russian army.³

It was in April that Lenin came to Petrograd, with his clear vision of the consequences of Socialist coalition with the bourgeoisie, as exemplified in all the warring countries – by the Vanderveldes, the Albert Thomas', the William English Wallings.⁴ I believe that almost alone in Russia, perhaps in the whole world, Lenin appreciated the significance and possibilities of the Soviets. It was he who saw what was coming; it was he who first raised the great cry, 'All Power to the Soviets.' As the Soviet leaders themselves were more and more carried away on the side of apathy, or even opposition to the will of the masses; as the masses felt themselves more and more abandoned, leaderless – the Bolshevik propaganda made rapid progress among them, culminating in the spontaneous but abortive uprising of July 16–18, which momentarily checked the spread of Bolshevism, but accomplished two other intensely important things: first, it almost wrecked the prestige of the Soviets, and secondly, it forced the moderate Socialists over to the side of the bourgeoisie.

With the Soviets weakened, the Bolsheviks ruined, the bourgeoisie grew suddenly insolent and impatient. The agrarian riots, caused by the Government's refusal to keep its promises about the land question, were suppressed by Cossacks; everywhere the left

wing Socialists were imprisoned, or rendered absolutely powerless – even in the Soviets. Almost openly, and with the participation of the Socialists in the Ministry, Kornilov was invited to become a second Napoleon. But the bourgeoisie had not estimated the latent strength of the revolutionary masses, who rose as one man as soon as the issue became clear. And the Kornilov attempt immediately revived the Soviets, those extraordinarily efficient instruments of revolutionary action, and raised the Bolsheviks at one bound into power. It was in September that the Soviets began to change their complexion – over night – first the Petrograd Soviet, then that of Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, followed by the smaller Soviets. At last the masses knew the way they should go, although their course of action was not yet clear.

But the bourgeoisie knew its danger, and determined at one stroke to crush the power of the Soviets forever. The real question in the minds of both sides had become the question of coalition with the bourgeoisie. And in the Democratic Conference, and afterward, in the Pre-Parliament, by the last exercise of all the influence they possessed, Kerensky and the Socialist ex-Ministers won the day for coalition, against the rapidly crystallizing opposition of all the masses of Russia. And what of the Soviets? In the *Izvestiya* of September 15 the Central Executive Committee spoke of the Coalition Government as follows:

At last a truly democratic government, born of the will of all classes of the Russian people, the first rough form of the future liberal parliamentary regime, has been formed. Ahead of us is the Constituent Assembly, which will solve all questions of fundamental law, and whose composition will be essentially democratic. The function of the Soviets is at an end, and the time is approaching when they must retire, with the rest of the revolutionary machinery, from the stage of a free and victorious people, whose weapons shall hereafter be the peaceful ones of political action.

At the opening meeting of the new Council of the Russian Republic, Trotsky rose to this feet on behalf of the Bolsheviks, and cried, 'With this government of the People's Treason we Bolsheviks have nothing to do!' And the Bolsheviks walked out. For them the issue was clear. The All-Russian Soviets had been called to

meet in Petrograd in the first week in November, and then it would be seen which was the stronger – the bourgeoisie, intelligentsia and moderate Socialists, or the proletariat.

Nobody doubted that this was war – the final battle for governmental power, which is by far the most important question of revolution. The Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, now allies of the bourgeoisie, tried every possible means to stop the meeting of the All-Russian Soviets – telegraphing their lieutenants all over Russia to hinder the election, declare against the congress, etc. It was at just that time that I had an interview with the secretary of the Central Committee of the Cadet Party. He said:

‘Since the Kornilov affair we Cadets don’t dare to be very active in public. Moreover, it is not necessary. The Moderate Socialists are doing all the dirty work for us, although too stupid to know it. The bourgeoisie wants everybody to co-operate with it, but it co-operates with nobody.’

But, as a matter of fact, the bourgeoisie made the same mistake it had made in the days of Kornilov. Flushed with triumph, it created a sort of parliament (Council of the Republic) which had no power, and an irresponsible Ministry. In this parliament the Cadet members even declared that it was illegal to declare Russia a republic! The destruction of the Soviets, restoration of discipline in the army, protection of private property – these were the questions discussed. And to crown all, Tereshchenko, Minister of Foreign Affairs, stood in the tribune and enunciated the same policy of war to annihilation which the Russian democracy had so strikingly repudiated when the Milyukov ministry fell in May.⁵

From all over Russia the Soviet delegates were gathering. From his hiding place Lenin lifted day after day his voice of brass, crying, ‘Insurrection! Insurrection!’ What followed was the November revolution.

All this seems very far away from the question of the Constituent Assembly, but, as a matter of fact, the evolution of ideas of government in the minds of both sides, hastened by the intense and swift life of the revolution, is clearly reflected in their viewpoint concerning the Constituent Assembly.

In all the first six months of the Revolution the bourgeoisie feared a democratically-elected Constituent Assembly, and postponed the date of its opening again and again, while the democracy clung to it as the solution of all difficulties. Finally the clamor

grew so great that the bourgeoisie was forced to agree to the opening of the Constituent at the end of November. But as late as September, one of the Cadet leaders said to me,

'If the Constituent shows any Utopian tendencies, we will execute a military coup d'état, surround the hall with soldiers and arrest the delegates . . .'⁶

On the other hand, all the masses and their organizations were in favor of the Constituent, and as late as the end of October, when Trotsky and the Bolsheviks left the Council of the Republic, they declared that they withdrew for one reason, because the bourgeoisie wanted to wreck the Constituent, and that they, the Bolsheviks, would defend it with their blood.

This apparent inconsistency with their later action in dissolving the assembly is always emphasized by the capitalist press of all countries, which pretends to believe that the Bolsheviks are as tyrannical as all bodies of men who achieve power, and that they dissolved the Constituent simply because it opposed their wishes. But that is not true.

I have said that in leaving the Council of the Republic the masses knew the way they should go, although their course of action was not clear. For example, there was a strong minority opposed to the insurrectionary policy of Lenin, who were only beaten by a few votes when it came to the question of whether or not to make the November revolution. So it was concerning the question of the Constituent. Although after the establishment of the Pre-parliament the masses knew instinctively that for them parliamentary democracy was a mortal enemy, still they had been educated for fifty years to believe that a Russian National Assembly would solve all their problems, just as the French people thought in 1789-92. Lenin, of course, was against the Constituent Assembly from the beginning, but it was not until after the November revolution, when the Soviets finally began to feel the power of the great Russian mass pouring through the channels of life, that the majority saw the utter futility of a conventional territorial assembly, elected in the very midst of the November revolution, from electoral lists made up so long before that the Social-Revolutionist party was still set down as one party with a single program, although in October it had split into two separate and distinct parties, with two programs.

Before the November revolution the masses had supported the Constituent, and the bourgeoisie had opposed it, because it was

plain that the majority would be Socialist; after the November revolution, however, the bourgeoisie supported the Constituent and the masses opposed it, because it was plain that the majority would be moderate Socialists, that is to say, anti-Bolshevik.

But the Soviets were better representative bodies than the Constituent; and the leaders of the Soviets knew that the moderate Socialist majority of the Constituent had no real following – that it hung in the air, like Mohamet's coffin. And, indeed, blown upon by the rough breath of the impatient people, the Constituent Assembly vanished like smoke, leaving no trace behind it.

As for the Soviets, when peace has come and the last effort of bourgeois counter-revolution is crushed; when the resistance of the bourgeoisie is finally crushed by the expropriation of all that feeds it: then the political function of the Soviets is largely at an end, and their economic function begins – uniting in themselves the organizations of the workers, the peasants, and leaving to the free urge of life the creative impulses of mankind. Out of these Soviets is coming a new and dreamed-of organization of society; a world in which government consists only in supplying men with the material for the building of happy cities.

The Revolutionary Age, 30 November 1918

NOTES

1. The Constituent Assembly had been a longstanding objective of Russian liberal and socialist parties, including, since 1903, the RSDRP. Though Lenin in April 1917 had proposed the immediate transition to Soviet rule, the idea of a Constituent Assembly had too great a symbolic importance across a wide spectrum of opinion for the Bolsheviks to abandon the slogan or cancel the elections, which were held between November 1917 and January 1918. Electoral returns were incomplete, and the party affiliation of deputies cannot be precisely established, but according to Soviet sources 715 deputies were elected, of whom 370 were PSR, 175 Bolsheviks, 86 from national groups, 40 Left PSR, 17 Kadets, 15 Mensheviks, and 2 Popular Socialists. Of these, approximately 410, amongst whom the PSR had a majority, convened on 18 January under the chairmanship of Viktor Chernov. At the end of a thirteen-hour session, early on the morning of the 19th, the Assembly was dispersed by the Tauride Palace guard acting on Bolshevik instructions. The Central Executive Committee of the Soviets declared the Assembly dissolved in a decree of 19 January 1918. See Oliver Radkey,

- The Election to the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1917* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950); and *Velikaya Oktabr'skaya Sotsialisticheskaya Revolyutsiya* (Moscow, 1987).
2. Reed interviewed Lyanozov on 15 October 1917 (*Ten Days*, pp. 7–8).
 3. Baron Sidney Sonnino (1847–1922) was the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Count Constantine Diamandi was the Rumanian Ambassador in Petrograd.
 4. Vandervelde, Thomas and Walling were in Reed's eyes types of those socialist politicians who advocated the *union sacrée* between bourgeois and capitalist parties and the socialist parties which was created across Europe when the war began. Vandervelde, leader of the Belgian Labour Party, served as Minister of State in the war cabinet in 1914. As chairman of the Bureau of the Socialist International he tried to reconcile the rival factions of the RSDRP before the First World War broke out and on 11 August 1914 sent a telegram to the RSDRP in the Fourth Duma urging them to support their government's war effort. Thomas, French socialist, was Minister of Munitions, 1916–17. As French Ambassador in Petrograd during the Provisional Government, he sought to mediate between the government and the Soviets in the matter of war aims. He supported Kerensky's policy for a military offensive in July 1917. Walling joined the Socialist Party in the United States in 1910. For the next seven years he was a prominent figure on the left wing of the party and became one of the leading socialist intellectuals. In 1917 he supported President Wilson's decision to declare war, and resigned his membership of the Socialist Party.
 5. See document 11, note 5.
 6. Slightly different words, but the same sentiments, are attributed by Reed to Lyanozov in *Ten Days*, p. 8.

They Are Still There!

At the present time the Allied armies in Russia – American troops among them – are supporting three ‘Governments’, which are said to be ‘supported by the majority of the Russian people’ (whoever they may be), have one characteristic in common; they stand for the return of Tsardom. So that the Allies, who started out with the scarcely-disguised intention of ‘restoring the Constituent Assembly’, and thus setting up a bourgeois Republic, now find themselves in the position of gendarmes of the Counter Revolution.

According to official statements of the American and Japanese Governments, the objects of intervention in Russia were, protection of military supplies in Arkhangelsk and Vladivostok against German and Austrian war-prisoners, and assistance to the Czechoslovaks, who were presumably trying to leave Russia. The most ‘solemn and public’ promises were given by both Governments that they had no intention of ‘interfering in the internal affairs of Russia’.¹ But the British Government, which was associated with the Americans and Japanese, stated through Lloyd George that the purpose of the intervention was to create ‘a center for the elements opposed to Bolshevism’. And the French Government, whose aims in Russia can least bear the light of liberal scrutiny, did not deign to publish them.

As soon as foreign troops landed on Russian soil the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Chicherin, addressed a note to the Allied and American Governments, asking why no notice of intervention had ever been given to the Government, and demanding a bill of complaint.

‘If the Allied and American Governments have any cause for complaint against the conduct of the Government of the Russian Republic,’ he said in effect, ‘we respectfully ask why it has not been called to our attention, that we may satisfy it . . .’

When the armistice with Germany was signed by the Allied and American Governments, Chicherin asked for an armistice with the Soviet Government also.

Both these communications were ignored. It may be urged that

neither the Allies nor the United States recognized or now recognize the Russian Government. But for months all these Governments carried on semi-official relations with Russia, have made demands on it again and again; and in March, President Wilson publicly addressed the Fourth Congress of Soviets as representatives of the Russian people . . . Is the only conclusion possible from all this that the aims of intervention are so frankly imperialistic that any statement of them would be extremely compromising . . . ?

Even those persons who were persuaded by the Sisson documents and other forgeries, and the subsidized propaganda of Milyukov's Ambassador in Washington, Mr. Bakhmetiev, that Lenin and Trotsky were German agents, must now be considerably puzzled. If it were true that the Bolsheviki in Russia were a tyrannical minority supported by German bayonets, the collapse of Imperial Germany would necessarily entail the collapse of the Bolsheviki – just as it entailed the collapse of the Ukrainian dictatorship, and the 'National Council' of the Baltic provinces. But the defeat of Germany has merely strengthened the Russian Soviet Government. Only the most credulous will be able to swallow the accusation of the capitalist press that the Kaiser, defeated in Germany, is still ruler of Russia!

One of the armistice terms imposed upon Germany requires that the indemnity paid by Russia to Germany must be surrendered to the Allies – to hold in trust for some future Russian Government. This Government, of course, must be acceptable to the Allies. There remains in Russia no force with any power except the force of the Black Hundreds – the Dark Forces against which the Russian people revolted in March, 1917, to the applause of the liberal world; any other Government set up in Russia must immediately fall, for the Russian 'moderates' and 'liberals' have no following whatever.

This is clearly shown by the history of the various so-called 'Governments' which have been set up and supported by Allied troops. These Governments – the Government of the North, at Arkhangelsk, the All-Russian Provisional Government at Ufa and at Omsk, and the Siberian Government at Irkutsk, centered about certain reactionary delegates to the Constituent Assembly – Chaikovsky, Avksentieff, Zenzinov and others; men who were too conservative even for the 'moderate' Socialist parties to which they belonged under Kerensky's regime.

It is a proof of the power of the Bolsheviki over the masses of the people, and a justification of the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly, that these 'liberals' and 'Socialists' were forced to depend for their fighting forces upon renegade Cossacks and Chinese mercenaries under outcasts like General Semenov, Horvath and Gurko, and Admiral Kolchak; upon the Czechoslovaks, the Japanese, and the Allies . . . And as was natural in such a situation, even the Allied and American troops could not save these 'governments' from being overthrown by the Russian riff-raff they had evoked to fight their battles.

The pressure upon the Russian Soviets has been terrible. The Allied diplomatic representatives in Moscow, it seems made use of their diplomatic privileges to plot counter-revolution and even the blowing up of bridges and munitions work, after the pattern of the Kaiser's hirelings in this country. Armed attacks having failed, deliberate and concerted efforts are being made to starve the Russian people into submission. In answer to this the Russian Soviet Government, while Allied troops were actually shooting down Russian peasants by the thousand in the North and on the East, treated subjects and citizens of the Allied nations and the United States with the greatest consideration. And in all this time they have left no stone unturned to make peace – even, according to dispatches offering reparation for property confiscated or destroyed in Russia, and for repudiated debts.

Shall the United States be a party to what, after all, has inevitably taken on the significance of an attempt to restore the Russian Tsar?

The Revolutionary Age, 11 December 1918

NOTE

1. Reed quotes Woodrow Wilson, justifying American military intervention in Russia, in a speech in July 1918.

Part III

1919–20

Chronology: John Reed in 1919–20

1919

- January Reed completes *Ten Days that Shook the World*. The manuscript is sent to his publishers, Boni and Liveright, by mid-month. The government case against *The Masses* is dropped. Victor Berger, former Socialist congressman from Milwaukee, is convicted under the Espionage Act. Reed's 'How Soviet Russia Conquered Imperial Germany' (document 28) published in *The Liberator*; 'Doctor Rakovsky' (document 30) published in *The Revolutionary Age*.
- February Reed is acquitted of inciting riot in Philadelphia. The indictment for his September 1917 speech is quashed. He is elected a member of the New York City Committee of the Left-Wing movement of the Socialist Party, and helps write the Left-Wing manifesto, issued on the 16th. Louise Bryant testifies before the Overman Committee in Washington on the 20th; Reed appears on the 21st. 'The Latest from Russia' (document 29) published in *The Liberator*.
- March *Ten Days* is published to generally favourable reviews, and sells 5000 copies in three months. Eugene Debs, former Socialist Party candidate for president, is convicted under the Espionage Act and sentenced to ten years in prison. (The sentence is commuted by President Harding in 1921.) The Lusk Committee of the New York State Legislature begins hearings into the threat of revolutionary radicalism. The Communist International (Comintern) is founded in Moscow on the 4th. Reed and Henry L. Slobodin, former member of the Socialist Party, conduct a Press Forum debate on Bolshevism.

- April The first issue of the *New York Communist*, edited by Reed, appears. The Left Wing captures twelve of fifteen seats on the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party. 'Prinkipo and After' (document 31) published in *The Liberator*.
- May Radicals across the United States attacked by police and government agents. The offices of the *New York Call* are raided and broken up by uniformed soldiers. Reed's 'Why Political Democracy Must Go', in which he argued against the electoral strategy of the Socialist Party, appears in the *New York Communist* (8 May – 21 June). On 9 May Reed is informed that his Socialist Party Local (for New York Assembly Districts 3, 5 and 10) is to be reorganized. The machinery is now in place to expel him, as a member of the Left Wing, from the party. Meeting on the 24th, the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party declare the April elections invalid. Locals affiliated to the Left Wing are reorganized, and 40,000 members, two-thirds of the national membership, are expelled. Reed's attack on John Spargo, 'Bolshevism: What It Is Not' (document 32), published in *The Liberator*.
- June A bomb attempt on the life of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer fails. On the 17th the Justice Department plans a mass round-up and deportation of aliens and radicals. At the age of twenty-four, J. Edgar Hoover is promoted to special assistant to the Attorney General, and placed in charge of the drive against radicals. The Left Wing of the Socialist Party holds a conference in New York on the 21st, but is split over tactics. A minority, led by the foreign-language federations, call for the immediate formation of a communist party. Reed votes against, arguing for the need to capture the Socialist Party for revolutionary socialism.
- July William Haywood is released from the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas, on payment of \$15,000 bail. (Rather than return to prison, he flees to Russia in April 1921, remaining there until his death

in 1928.) Reed's allies in the National Left Wing Council change sides, and join the foreign-language federations in their call for a communist party. Reed and Gitlow take their case to meetings of the rank-and-file of the Left Wing in New York.

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| August | Reed resigns from the National Council of the Left Wing, and from the staff of <i>The Revolutionary Age</i> , when his position is voted down by the rank-and-file. He prepares the first issue of <i>Voice of Labor</i> , which appears on the 15th. The Socialist Party special convention meets at Machinists' Hall in Chicago. Reed's delegation of eighty is challenged by the credentials committee and his supporters are expelled by the police. Reed's group adjourned to another room in Machinists' Hall, where they create the Communist Labor Party. He writes its platform. The foreign-language federation delegates, led by Fraina and Ruthenberg, form the Communist Party. Both parties experience a dramatic decline in membership. |
| September | After returning from Chicago, Reed is under constant surveillance by New York police detectives, federal agents and investigators. With forged papers Reed joins the crew of a Scandinavian boat and works his passage across the Atlantic as a stoker. He jumps ship in Bergen. A national steel strike begins in the United States on the 22nd. |
| October | Reed travels across Norway, where he finds the socialists 'entirely won to Bolshevism.' He writes to Bryant, 'I am the big cheese in these parts.' He crosses into Sweden and then into Finland. A strike in the American soft-coal mines affects 600,000 miners. |
| November | Five socialists elected to the New York State Assembly are denied their seats. |
| December | Reed arrives in Moscow. He declines treatment as a visiting celebrity, and lodges in a room in a working- |

class district. Lenin approves of his decision. Reed appeals to the Executive Committee of the Comintern for official recognition for the Communist Labor Party. He interviews Trotsky (document 33) on the 15th. Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman are deported from the United States along with many other radicals.

1920

- January Reed's contributions begin to appear in *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, organ of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. The Comintern orders the unification of the two communist parties in the United States. Agents of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation stage raids against radicals in thirty-three cities. Between 4000 and 6000 persons arrested in the 'Palmer raids'. As a leader of the Communist Labor Party, Reed is indicted in Chicago for a conspiracy to overthrow the government by force.
- February Reed tries to leave Russia via Latvia, but fails. While travelling by the covert 'Coal Box' route from Finland to Stockholm he is betrayed and arrested on board a steamer in the port of Åbo (now Turku). He claims to be a sailor named James Gormley, but is found to be carrying 102 diamonds and letters from Lenin, Trotsky and Emma Goldman. Despite adopting the tactic of non-communication during interrogation to protect his Finnish comrades, he is tried and convicted for smuggling. The US chargé d'affaires in Helsingfors (now Helsinki) obtains copies of the letters Reed is carrying and sends them to Washington. Reed, meanwhile, is held in prison in virtual isolation. Reports of his arrest appear in the American press on the 17th.
- April The American press reports that Reed has been executed as a spy in Finland. A denial is printed the next day. J. Edgar Hoover's anti-communist cam-

paign collapses when a federal judge in Boston rules that membership alone of the Communist Party or of the Communist Labor Party is not sufficient grounds to justify the deportation of aliens.

- May Accepting the court ruling that membership of the Communist Labor Party was not, in itself, a deportable offence, Secretary of Labor William Wilson orders the release of 300 party members. Reed's physical and emotional condition deteriorates. On the 18th he threatens to go on hunger strike. The US State Department refuses to grant him a passport.
- June Reed is allowed to leave Finland for Estonia on the 5th. He returns to Petrograd on the 7th.
- July Bryant is smuggled out of New York to join Reed in Russia. Reed is a delegate at the Second Congress of the Comintern. Reed's attempt on the 23rd, at the second session, to have English declared an official language of the Congress is defeated by fourteen votes. On the 25th he delivers a speech on Communist policy towards Negroes, urging the defeat of racial prejudice and the integration of Negro workers into (white) unions.
- August At the ninth session, on the 3rd, Reed bitterly clashes with Radek over procedure during discussion of the trade-union question. On the next day he opposes the subordination of a proposed International Trade Union Council (Mezhsovprom) to the Executive Committee of the Comintern. On the 5th he voices the opposition of the Anglo-American minority to Radek's and Lenin's policy of working within existing trade-union structures. His attempt to refer back Radek's thesis fails. He is elected to the Executive Committee of the Comintern. The Polish counter-offensive against the Red Army begins on the 16th.
- September Very much against his will, Reed attends the Congress of the Oppressed Peoples of the East, held at

Baku, which opened on the 1st. While in Azerbaijan he contracts typhus. On his return to Moscow Reed is reunited with Bryant.

October The Polish–Soviet war ends with an armistice signed on the 12th. Reed dies of typhus on the 17th. His funeral, held at the Trade Union Hall on the 23rd, is addressed by Nikolai Bukharin, Alexandra Kollontai and Boris Reinstein. His coffin is carried in procession, led by a military band playing a funeral march, to the wall of the Kremlin, where he is buried.

28

How Soviet Russia Conquered Imperial Germany

Now that Imperial Germany is overthrown, we are told by the capitalist press of all countries that the Allied armies did it.

The pressure of superior Allied arms undoubtedly broke the power of the German offensive in the west, but that is all. *Soviet Russia conquered Imperial Germany.*

Two months ago our Government warned us that the war might last five years longer. At the very height of the German retreat, the *Army and Navy Journal* and the military experts of the *New York Tribune* and the *London Times* pointed out that the German armies were falling back in perfect order, according to well-worked-out strategic plans. When the Allied armies entered Lille they were not even in contact with the German rear-guard. Germany could have defended her frontiers almost indefinitely . . .

It was not the Allied armies which broke the morale of the Central Powers, but something else, something internal. It is generally admitted that Germany had plenty of men, plenty of arms, and even food . . . Why couldn't she answer Bulgaria's call for help? And Austria's? Because in Germany itself, in the heart of the greatest military machine in history was a more powerful enemy than the Allies – the Rising of the Proletariat.

The German Imperial Government, the German bourgeoisie, preferred surrender to the bourgeois nations of the west, who respect private property, to the Social Revolution . . . Even now, as the Russian bourgeoisie before them, they are appealing to the Allies for help against their own Red working class . . .

In July, 1917, after three months of inaction, the Russian armies were ordered to advance in Galicia. During those three months there had been almost continuous fraternization on the Eastern front. The German armies were becoming demoralized – whole regiments refused to fire on the Russian lines, were reorganized, and many

soldiers executed. There was alarm throughout Germany, But the Galician offensive broke the spell. Nothing could have been more welcome to the German High Command.

In Stockholm, in August, I saw a letter written by Rosa Luxemburg to a friend:

So, you Russians have broken the peace! The Russian Revolution was everything to us, too. Everything in Germany was tottering, falling . . . For months the soldiers of the two armies had fraternized, and our officers were powerless . . . Then suddenly, without a word of warning, the Russians fired on their German comrades! After that it was easy to convince the Germans that the Russian peace was a lie. Alas, my poor friends! Germany will destroy you now, and for us is black despair come again. . . .

It was because of this that the German advance on Riga was so effective, although there had been no fighting in that sector since April . . . When the Army Committee of the Twelfth Army evacuated the city, however, soldiers went about under bombardment, posting on all walls and open spaces this proclamation:

German Soldiers!

The Russian soldiers of the Twelfth Army draw your attention to the fact that you are carrying on a war for autocracy against Revolution, freedom and justice. The victory of Wilhelm will be death to democracy and freedom. We withdraw from Riga, but we know that the forces of the Revolution will ultimately prove themselves more powerful than the force of cannons. We know that in the long run your conscience will overcome everything, and that the German soldiers, with the Russian Revolutionary Army, will march to the victory of freedom. You are at present stronger than we are, but yours is only the victory of brute force. The moral force is on our side. History will tell that the German proletarians went against their revolutionary brothers, and that they forgot international working-class solidarity. This crime you can expiate only by one means. You must understand your own and at the same time the universal interests, and strain all your immense power against imperialism, and go hand in hand with us – toward life and liberty!

A month later mutiny broke out on the German fleet at Kiel. The sailors of the Russian battleships in the Baltic, in convention assembled, sent this greeting:

The revolutionary sailors of the Baltic Fleet . . . send their brotherhood greetings to their heroic German comrades who have taken part in the insurrection at Kiel.

The Russian sailors are in complete possession of their battleships. The Sailors' Committees are the High Command. The yacht of the former Tsar, the *Polar Star*, is now the headquarters of the Fleet Committee, which is composed of common sailors, one from each ship.

Since the Revolution, the Russian Fleet is as busy as formerly, but the Russian sailors will not use the fleet to fight their brothers, but everywhere to fight under the Red Flag of the International for the freedom of the proletariat throughout the entire world.

The first act of the Bolshevik uprising in November was to order all company, regimental and army committees on the Russian front to begin fraternization with the Germans, and to conclude immediate temporary armistice treaties with the military units opposing them.

On the night of November 8, in the Congress of Soviets, Lenin read the Decree on Peace, part of which said:

Addressing this proposal for peace to the Governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia addresses itself also in particular to the conscious workmen of the three most advanced nations of humanity and the greatest of the powers participating in the present war – England, France and Germany. The workers of these countries have rendered great service to the cause of progress and Socialism; the Chartist movement in England, the series of Revolutions carried out by the French proletariat, and lastly, the heroic struggle against the Laws of Exception in Germany,¹ and the long, stubborn, disciplinary work of creating proletarian organizations in Germany, which ought to serve as a model for the whole world – all these models of proletarian heroism and historical creation are guarantees that the workers

of the above-named countries will understand their duty, which is to deliver humanity from the horrors and results of war. These same workers, by their decisive and energetic action, will help us bring to a successful conclusion the fight for peace, and at the same time the liberation of all the working-classes from slavery and exploitation . . .²

At the same time a proclamation to the German soldiers was drawn up, printed in millions of copies, and not only smuggled across the front but dropped from aeroplanes inside Germany. It begins:

To the German Soldiers!
SOLDIERS, BROTHERS!

On October 25 (old style), the workmen and soldiers of St. Petersburg overthrew the imperialistic Government of Kerensky and placed the whole power in the hands of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. The new Government, under the name of the Council of People's Commissars, was confirmed by the All-Russian Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Our program, to the execution of which the Government has immediately proceeded, consists in a proposal of an immediate democratic peace, which has already been communicated to the belligerent nations and their Governments, in the transfer without compensation of all the land to the peasants for their use, and in the realization of Workers' Control over production and industry.

We have taken all measures and will in the future leave none untried, in order that all the belligerent Governments and peoples shall be informed of the full content of our peace negotiations. In addition to the above mentioned peace proposal, we consider it our duty to address ourselves particularly to you, as representatives of a nation which is at the head of the coalition engaged in war against Russia on an extensive front.

Soldiers, Brothers! We ask you to stand by Socialism with all your might in the struggle for immediate peace, as that is the only means to secure an equitable and permanent peace for the working-classes of all countries, and to heal the wounds which the present most criminal of all wars has inflicted on humanity . . .

This was followed by the 'Appeal to the Toiling and Exploited Peoples of All Lands', and the texts of the Decree on Peace and the Decree on Land.

A proclamation printed for the Austrian trenches hailed Friedrich Adler, arrested for assassinating a reactionary Minister in Vienna, as the 'Eagle' (*Adler*) of the International Social Revolution.

The first week in November there was established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a Bureau of the Press, under Radek, and a Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda, in charge of Boris Reinstein, of Buffalo, New York, in which for a short time I held a position in the English-speaking Section. I was succeeded by Albert Rhys Williams who, after the Brest-Litovsk treaty, became Commissar of the whole bureau, then disguised under the name of Bureau of Foreign Political Literature.

We immediately began publication of a series of daily propaganda newspapers. The first of these was in German, *Die Fackel* (The Torch), issued in editions of half a million a day, and sent by special train to the central Army Committees in Minsk, Kiev and other cities, which, in turn, by special automobiles, distributed them to different towns along the front, where a regularly-organized system of couriers brought them to the front trenches for distribution.

During the day time, at the official fraternization points, bundles of these papers were ostentatiously carried; and they were always confiscated by the German officers. But at night the real work of distribution began. In isolated spots there were continually secret meetings, at which the bundles of propaganda literature were put into the hands of German soldiers. At other points Russian soldiers buried bundles of papers in places agreed upon, where they were dug up by the Germans.

After about a dozen numbers the name of *Die Fackel* was changed to *Der Völkerfriede* (The People's Peace). By this time we had daily papers in Hungarian, Bohemian, Rumanian (for the Transylvanian regiments) and Croatian. Williams and I also got out a weekly illustrated paper of four pages, for the simpler, less-educated German soldiers, called *Die Russische Revolution in Bildern* (The Russian Revolution in Pictures). Each number contained twelve or fifteen photographs of revolutionary events with a caption underneath of extremely elementary propaganda.

Under a scene wherein a workman is tearing the Imperial eagles from the roof of a palace, and the crowd is burning them:

On the roof of a palace, a workingman is tearing down the hateful emblem of autocracy. At the foot of the building the crowd is burning the eagles. The soldier is explaining to the crowd that the overthrow of autocracy is only the first step in the march of social revolution.

It is easy to overthrow autocracy. Autocracy rests on nothing but the blind obedience of soldiers.

The Russian soldiers merely opened their eyes, and autocracy disappeared.

For a photograph of soldiers meeting in a palace:

Socialists have often said, 'Those who build the palaces should live in them!'

Here in Russia for the first time you can see workmen-soldiers, whose sweat and labor built the palace, whose blood was shed defending it, enjoying a palace as their home.

And under a picture of the German Embassy in Petrograd was this:

See the great banner. It is the word of a famous German. Was it Bismarck? Was it Hindenburg? No, it is the call of immortal Karl Marx to international brotherhood: 'Proletarians of all lands, unite!'

This is not only a pretty decoration of the German Embassy. In all seriousness the Russian Workmen, Soldiers and Peasants have raised this banner, to you German people they hurl back the same words that your Karl Marx gave the whole world seventy years ago.

At last a real proletarian republic has been founded. But this republic cannot be secure until the workers of all lands conquer the power of government.

The Russian workers, peasants and soldiers will soon send a Socialist as ambassador to Berlin. When will Germany send an international socialist to this building of the German Embassy in Petrograd?

Emissaries were sent out to visit all the German prison-camps in Russia and Siberia, and encourage the formation of Socialist organizations. For this work there were men who spoke German, Hungarian, Rumanian, Polish, Yiddish, Turkish, Croatian, Czechoslo-

vak and Bulgarian. The response was immediate. In Moscow, for example, ten thousand German and Austrian prisoners organized along Bolshevik lines and started an active propaganda among their countrymen. Newspapers for the prisoners, published in their own languages by their fellow prisoners, started up all over Russia and Siberia. The money was furnished by the Soviet Government, and the whole work was controlled by the Bureau of War Prisoners attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This work was so effective that when prisoners were returned to Austria and Germany they were confined for thirty days in 'political quarantine camps', fed and treated well, and 'educated' with Government promises, patriotic literature and Majority Social-Democratic propaganda.

Hundreds of thousands of these German prisoners and deserters applied for citizenship in the new Soviet Republic. Thousands enlisted in the Red Army; in fact, it was the German and Austrian prisoners who put up the only effective resistance to the Imperial German and Austrian armies marching into Russia after Brest-Litovsk . . . On May Day, 1918, when Count von Mirbach, the German ambassador, was watching the Parade in Moscow, he was startled to see a company of German soldiers marching with the Soviet troops, under red banners with revolutionary inscriptions in their own language.

Another branch of the Propaganda Bureau's work was the reception of deserters, who came across the lines in a continuous stream. They always had interesting information, if it were only how our publicity was going and what interested the German soldiers most . . . But sometimes they came on unusual errands. I remember a delegation from the German troops on the island of Oesel, who wanted literature *and speakers* to take back with them! A couple of sailors who spoke German were sent back with them, smuggled across the lines in German uniforms; they stayed a week and converted about a thousand men.

Back of the German lines, near Kovno, at this time, was formed a camp of mutineers, about fifteen or twenty thousand of them according to deserters' stories. They refused to fight, and declared that if the front line moved forward they would fire on it. Our delegates made their way across the lines to that camp, with detailed information about the Revolution, copies of Soviet decrees and proclamations. Just before the end of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations the camp was destroyed by artillery fire; but the poison spread.

During the armistice and peace negotiations, which, at Trotsky's instance, were conducted in the open, the German newspapers intentionally falsified the reports. The Soviet Government published daily the correct version in *Der Völkerfriede*, with which the German trenches were flooded. Proclamations, appeals, decrees, all in German, urging the enemy soldiers to upset their Government, throw out the Kaiser, declare a revolutionary peace . . . Every day or so General Hoffman threatened to break off negotiations if the Russian troops were not ordered to cease fraternization and to refrain from inciting German troops to revolt. After the armistice was signed, too, the Imperial Government warned the Soviets that revolutionary propaganda was a violation of the armistice.

To this the Council of People's Commissars answered by apologies and promises. Krylenko, the Russian Commander, publicly ordered that propaganda should cease, and privately sent word to the troops to redouble their efforts.

On the 23d of December the Soviet Government passed the following resolution:

Taking into consideration that the Soviet Power is based on the principle of international proletarian solidarity and the brotherhood of workers of all countries, that the struggle against the war and against Imperialism can only lead to victory if it is carried out on an international scale, the Council of People's Commissars deems it necessary to come to the assistance of the Left International wing of the labor movement of all countries, by all possible means, including funds, whether the said countries are at war with Russia, or allied to Russia, or occupying a neutral position.

For this purpose the Council of People's Commissars resolves: That at the disposal of the foreign representative of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs shall be placed the sum of Two Million Rubles for the needs of the Revolutionary Internationalist movement.

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars,

V. ULYANOV (LENIN)

People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs,

L. TROTSKY.

By September, 1918, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had on its payroll sixty-eight agents in Austria-Hungary, and more than that in Germany, as well as others in France, Switzerland and Italy.

Of course most of the attention of the Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda was concentrated on the Central Powers. A weekly magazine in French-English was planned, as well as an Italian weekly, but never carried out. For one agent in the Allied countries, the Soviet Government had fifty in Germany and Austria.

The Central Powers were Soviet Russia's greatest menace. It was utterly impossible for Imperial Germany and Socialist Russia to exist side by side. Imperial Germany must be destroyed – and quickly. But while in Germany there existed the most sinister enemy of the Russian Revolution, on the other hand in Germany was also Russia's greatest potential ally – a working class well-trained in the fundamentals of Marxian doctrine and better organized than any other in Europe.

This condition determined somewhat the form of Russian propaganda. It was all aimed at the German workers and soldiers. It would not do simply to cry out against the Kaiser and the Junkers; that is the trick of the bourgeoisie, practised for four long years in the name of 'democracy' by all the Imperialists of the western nations. The German workers were too well educated to be fooled by that. Propaganda had to be international, *against all bourgeois imperialists*, with special emphasis on the Secret Treaties, and the imperialistic designs and actions of the Entente.

But the Bolshevik attack on the Kaiser and the German Junkers did not cease, for all of that. . . . In the first number of *Rabochii i Soldat*, organ of the Petrograd Soviet, published October 31, 1917, occurred the following paragraph:

The German Kaiser, covered with the blood of millions of innocent dead, wants to hurl his army against Petrograd. Let us call to the German workmen, soldiers and peasants, who want peace not less than we do, to . . . stand up against this damned war!

This can be done only by a revolutionary Government, which would speak really for the workmen, soldiers and peasants of Russia, and would appeal over the heads of the diplomats directly to the German troops, fill the German trenches with proclamations in the German language . . . Our airmen would spread these proclamations all over Germany . . .

This was one week before the Bolshevik insurrection.

Eight days later, in an appeal to the German soldiers, the Council of People's Commissars said:

Brothers, German soldiers! The great example of your comrade, Karl Liebknecht, the most eminent leader of International Socialism, the persevering and long-continued struggle which you have conducted by publishing newspapers and pamphlets, by numerous demonstrations and strikes, the struggle for which your Government has thrown into prison hundreds and thousands of your comrades, and lastly, the heroic revolt of your sailors of the Fleet serve as a guarantee to us that the mass of the working-class of your nation is ready to enter the decisive struggle for peace.

Hasten to our assistance! In the name of the Workers' and Peasants' Government we guarantee that our soldiers shall not move one step forward if you decide to take in your hands the flag of peace, and even if the struggle for peace inside your country takes away part of your forces from the front . . .

After Brest-Litovsk, according to the provisions of the treaty the Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda was abolished. But the first act of the new Council of People's Commissars was secretly to reorganize this work, appointing an unofficial committee to take charge of it, and appropriating for this purpose twenty million rubles.

At the same time Adolf Joffe was made Ambassador to Berlin. In his suite were ten expert propagandists who spoke German. They bought bicycles, on which they began a systematic tour of the country, organizing, spreading the word, preparing. The three million Russian prisoners were reached. Two of these couriers were caught and expelled from the country. Joffe was repeatedly warned by the German Government, repeatedly apologized, and kept on.

His first act in the German capital was to hoist over the Russian Embassy the Red Flag, lettered with the device of the Soviet Republic, 'Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic. Workmen of all countries, unite!' He refused to present his credentials to the Kaiser, and invited to his first state banquet Haase, Ledebour, Dittman, Franz Mehring, Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin and Karl Liebknecht (then in prison).

The first act of the new German coalition Ebert Government was to expel Joffe from Berlin – as was natural. However, he was invited to return a week later by the Berlin Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, and did so. Upon his release from prison, Karl Liebknecht, his flower-filled carriage escorted by hundreds of thousands of workers, went straight to the Russian Embassy, from the balcony of which he made a speech, saying that it was now time that the German people followed Russia's example.

The New York evening newspapers of 25 November report an address of Liebknecht's before the Berlin Workers' and Soldiers' Council, upon the night of the overthrow of the Coalition Government:

Did the bourgeoisie while in power permit you to have a voice in the Government? No! Then the workers must not allow it to have any say now. We need a Government of soldiers and workmen, one typifying the proletariat, which will not have to bow down before the Entente.

There must be no dickerings with Entente imperialism. We will dispose of that just as we did with German autocracy. The Revolution is bound also to reach the Entente countries, but we, who made the Russians waste a whole year, are insisting that the Revolution break out in England and France within twenty-four hours . . .

During this same period the Allied Governments were conducting an enormous propaganda, not only in the Central Empires, through Switzerland, Scandinavia and Holland, but also in Russia itself. The Russian branch of the American Committee on Public Information spent more than three hundred thousand dollars in Russia, printing Wilson's speeches in thousands of copies, producing great moving picture films, and hiring Russian propagandists.³ French and the British Governments maintained expensive Information Bureaus in all countries. In the neutral countries and in Russia newspapers were subsidized, and even bought by the Allies, and local journalists were on the payroll of the Allied Embassies . . .

Why did Allied propaganda fail and Bolshevik propaganda succeed? The reason is simple, especially simple as regards American propaganda. *The masses of the war-weary peoples of Russia and of the Central Powers were Socialists.* They had been educated to look forward to the Social Revolution, the destruction of the

bourgeoisie, the public seizure of land, industrial plants and financial institutions. They were fundamentally trained to see in the war a simple clash of capitalistic interests . . .

Allied propaganda harped on patriotism, on the advantages of the bourgeois political democracy; its language was the language of eighteenth century political economy. It showed a hatred of Socialism only less than its hatred of Kaiserism. American propaganda advocated the American form of government as the social and economic millennium. In America there was free speech, free press and universal wealth. By editing and perverting the words and deeds of real American Socialists, it was proven that we had gone back on our Internationalism, that we were heart and soul with the Government. This was done in the case of Eugene Debs, Max Eastman, myself . . . The activities of Gompers, Walling, Spargo and Russell were played up. Boasting about America's part in the war, statistics, moving pictures showing the amount of gold bullion in the vaults of the United States Treasury . . . All these phases of political and economic life which the Russian and German people had been working to get rid of for decades were displayed to them . . . Root was sent to Russia. Frank Bohn was sent to Switzerland to get in touch with the Germans . . .

In all these efforts at creating pro-ally sympathy in the 'hostile' countries Socialism was let severely alone. Only the most reactionary pro-Government Majority Socialist groups in all countries were thought worthy of influencing. The Liberal republican movements were fostered. Purely Nationalist sentiments were encouraged in all the little oppressed countries.

To Allied propagandists the most effective weapons were President Wilson's speeches, which the revolutionary working-class of all countries refused to trust, and which did not interest them much anyway . . .

The Liberator, January 1919

NOTES

1. After two attempts to assassinate the Kaiser in Berlin in 1878, a law was passed in the Reichstag which banned the formation or existence of social-democratic organizations. They remained in force until 1890, when they were not renewed.

2. Reed printed an extended version of this decree in *Ten Days*, pp. 127–30.
3. The scale of the American propaganda effort in Russia was even larger than Reed understood. 50,000 copies of Wilson's address to the Russian people in early December 1917, 300,000 copies of his speech of 8 January 1918, and 300,000 copies of Arthur Bullard's 'Letters to a Russian Friend' were printed. Four million copies of Wilson's 'fourteen points' speech were distributed. See George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (New York, [1920]).

29

The Latest from Russia

When Allied troops first landed on the Russian coasts, without any demands upon the Soviet Government, without a formal declaration of war, Trotsky asked the Governments of England, France and the United States to state their demands upon the Russian Government; promising that these demands would be complied with as far as possible. None of the Governments answered; the answer would have been cynical.

Meanwhile more and more troops were sent to Siberia and to Arkhangelsk. Against these forces, supported by the Czechoslovaks, under the terms of the most shameful bargain by which any nation ever purchased its independence, a large and well-equipped Soviet army has been slowly growing.

The Allied forces are now supporting three Governments of definitely monarchist tendencies in Russia; one at Arkhangelsk, one at Vladivostok, and a third at Omsk. At first the Czechoslovaks and Allied armies put down the Soviets in the places under their control, thus violating the 'solemn and public' promise of the American and Japanese Governments not to interfere in the internal affairs of Russia, politically or otherwise. Then they set up Governments composed largely of members of the Constituent Assembly, coalition Ministries representing 'moderate' Socialist, Mensheviki and Socialist Revolutionaries, and the bourgeoisie. Again and again these Governments fell, Monarchist dictators taking their place. This happened in Arkhangelsk, when the Government of Chaikovsky was overthrown,¹ and in Vladivostok, when General Horvath executed his *coup d'état*.² The Allies were compelled to suppress the Monarchists and restore the 'democratic' Governments. Finally they gave way. The last of the 'constitutional' Governments was upset the other day at Omsk.³

Admiral Kolchak, a reactionary of the worst type, seized the supreme power of the 'Provisional Government' of the Russian 'Republic', as it was called, and threw into prison the 'liberal' Ministers lately so well advertised by the capitalist press – Zenzinov and Avksentiev. A Washington dispatch of 22 November said:

News of the coup at Omsk, by which Admiral Kolchak virtually has become dictator of the All-Russian forces, is regarded at the State Department as *another sign pointing to stabilization of the movement relied upon to regenerate Russia.*

The great weakness in the situation in Siberia, it has been believed for some time, is the lack of a powerful head of the Government, *who cannot be swayed by popular demonstrations, and who will work toward the reconstruction of the Government with a firm hand.* Admiral Kolchak is thought to be the man who will not misuse his authority, and *whose hostility toward the Bolshevik elements which have led to the disruption of the country, is strong.*

The jurisdiction of the Omsk Government extends to a large section of Russians to the west who have been affected by the Bolshevik doctrines that spread from the German intrigues with Lenin, Trotsky and their followers. *The very fact that the members of the Omsk Government, which now has been overturned, were duly elected members of the Constituent Assembly, is said to have worked against the firm establishment of a stable Government. The officials were dependent upon the workmen of the cities and employees of the railroad largely, for their positions, and the spread of Bolshevism has been most pronounced among those very people. Accordingly it was difficult for the authorities to enforce their regulations to check Bolshevism . . .*

So. The State Department repudiates the Russian Constituent Assembly, as the Bolsheviks did. But with a difference; the Bolsheviks oppose the Constituent because it *did not* represent the people, the State Department because it *does*. A paraphrase of the above; Russia must have a government strong enough to disregard the popular will. The Provisional Government was not strong enough, because in a limited way it was responsible to the people, and the people were turning Bolshevik!

What does this mean? It means, as I have often pointed out, that there are only two parties in Russia – pro-Soviet and Monarchist. The ‘moderate’ Socialists, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, lost most of their following a year ago, and it has been dwindling ever since they championed foreign intervention in Russia. A Government composed of ‘moderate’ Socialists could only be supported by foreign bayonets, and then with difficulty. The Soviet parties were suppressed; that left only the Monarchists. That is why the Allies are supporting the party of the Tsar in Russia.

Worse than that . . . It is all very well to support the party of the Tsar, led by a friend like Admiral Kolchak – but what are you going to do when there suddenly arise *two* Tsarist Governments in the same territory, *both* led by friends? This is what appears to have happened in Siberia. Just when a delegation arrived in Washington to urge the recognition of Kolchak's Government, General Semenov, the well-known Cossack renegade who has been supported by *part* of our State Department, declared that he would not recognize Kolchak, and set up his own government at Chita. There was a long account in an Associated Press dispatch the other day of a correspondent's visit to the General, who seemed to be living the life of a president in a Central American Republic, shut up in his house in his capital city, guarded by hundreds of Cossacks, and recovering from a bomb somebody had tossed at him in a local theater – on behalf of what party we do not know.

A week ago from the time of this writing, 7 January, things looked black indeed for Soviet Russia. The forces of the Siberian Government (whatever that is) had taken Perm; the French had landed at Odessa; the British fleet was operating along the Estonian coast, shelling the Soviet troops, and British soldiers had landed at Riga; the British Government had taken under its protection the German-erected Governments of the Baltic Provinces, and according to the newspapers, was ordering the German troops to oppose the Russians; the French troops at Odessa were killing Russians in the streets; in the North, the Allies were pushing forward down the Onega River; according to persons connected with the State Department, we were getting ready to ship an army to Siberia. The Ebert–Scheidemann government was threatening war against Soviet Russia.

Since then things have happened. The same day that Perm fell, Soviet troops captured Ufa and moved upon Chelyabinsk, threatening General Gajda's flank. The Czechoslovaks passed a resolution refusing to fight any more against Soviet Russia. The British fleet sailed south to Danzig, presumably to help the Poles to force a little self-determination on Northern Germany; the British troops got out of Riga in a hurry, and the Russians came in. Japan, after a row with the Allies over who should get what in Siberia, withdrew 34,000 men; England announced that no more troops would be sent to Russia. My friend in the State Department says that the American Government is pledged to the same action. Only the French still seem to be hollering for war on a large scale, and there

are things which make me believe that perhaps before long the French Government will get magnanimous rather suddenly. And last of all, but most important, the German Revolution seems at last to have broken out . . .

The Liberals are raising once more their drooping voices in praise of President Wilson. It is to him, they say, that all this is due. In this we Socialists must beg to differ. In the first place, it would be premature to say that any change in the Allies' attitude toward Russia has taken place. In the second place, if it has, it is due to troubles, of which we have been getting a hint in the papers, at home in England and France. In the third place, if President Wilson has had anything to do with this reputed change of front, it is because he has a Machiavellian scheme – like the Mexico one – to get us out by getting us in, or to 'check Bolshevism by making concessions', or some such childishness. In the fourth place, we call to the attention of the public the fact that Soviet Russia has now a *volunteer Revolutionary Army* of somewhat over a million men, which is doing very well on all fronts . . .

If Soviet Russia is winning, it is because Soviet Russia has the strength to win, not only in Russia, but in the ranks of the working-class of Europe.

The Liberator, February 1919
(written 14 January 1919)

NOTES

1. The Bolshevik government in Arkhangelsk was overthrown by Russian officers with the help of British, American and French troops in August 1918 and a predominantly PSR government was formed under Nikolai Chaikovsky. Following an abortive coup by a naval officer, Chaplin, in September, this government resigned, and in January 1919 the Russian General Eugene Miller assumed power with Allied support. In May 1919 Miller recognized the authority of Admiral Kolchak. Allied forces evacuated Arkhangelsk in October 1919 and the town fell to the Bolsheviks on 20 February 1920.
2. In July 1918 General Dmitrii Horvath, General Manager of the Chinese Eastern Railway, proclaimed himself provisional ruler of the railway zone, pending the reconvening of the Constituent Assembly. Japanese and British troops landed in Vladivostok on 3 August 1918, and were followed by American and French forces.

3. A 'West Siberian Commissariat' had been formed in Omsk on 1 June 1918 by PSR members of a former West Siberian Government elected by universal suffrage which had been dispersed by the Bolsheviks. On 30 June the Commissariat was replaced by a more right-wing 'Provisional Siberian Regional Government' under the Cadet lawyer Peter Vologodsky. At a State Conference convened in Ufa from 8 to 23 September 1918 this body combined with a 'Committee of Members of the Constituent Assembly', set up in Samara in June 1918, to form a 'Provisional All-Russian Government' or 'Directory' which would be accountable to the Constituent Assembly should the latter reconvene by February 1919. Though it included the PSRs N.D. Avksentiev and V.M. Zenzinov, this government was even more reactionary and in October it appointed Admiral Kolchak as War Minister. Kolchak overthrew the Directory on 18 November 1918 and assumed dictatorial powers.

30

Doctor Rakovsky

For two months in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Government at Petrograd I worked side by side with Rakovsky. He was editing a daily paper in Rumanian, *Inainte*, which was distributed not only in the ranks of the Rumanian army, but also to the Transylvanian soldiers of the Austrian army. He made frequent trips to the south of Russia, where he secretly crossed the Rumanian lines and traveled incognito through his own country, spreading revolutionary doctrine, at the risk of his life.

In December, 1917, when the Soviet Government signed an armistice with Germany and Austria, Rumania refused to participate. The Russian troops on the Rumanian front obeyed orders from Petrograd and entertained at headquarters a German and Austrian delegation. The Rumanian Government arrested this delegation, and upon the protest of the Russians surrounded them with Rumanian troops and fired on them with artillery. The Russian soldiers had to cut their way by force through the Rumanian lines back to Russia, losing many men.

The consequences were swift. Trotsky ordered the immediate arrest of the Rumanian minister at Petrograd.¹ The next day Allied and neutral ambassadors demanded his liberation. This was granted, but the Soviet Government ordered that the Rumanian diplomatic mission should leave Russia within ten hours.

That afternoon I was in the office of Zalkind, Assistant Commissaire of Foreign Affairs. In one corner were five or six red guards and sailors drinking tea around a battered samovar. At the side of the room Rakovsky sat at a table, writing furiously.

Entered *Shveitzar* in the old-time resplended livery of the Tsar. He had a card. It read Mr A—, first secretary of the Rumanian Embassy to Russia.

'Show him in,' said Zalkind. There appeared a dapper youth in a frock coat, silk hat, gloves and stick. He surveyed the room with uneasiness mingled with contempt. Zalkind, wearing peasant boots and an old uniform without insignia, came forward to meet him.

'What can I do for you, sir?' he asked courteously.

'This is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?' asked the secretary. 'We have received an order emanating from somewhere that the Rumanian Embassy must leave Russia within ten hours. My dear sir, that is impossible. We have much to do. Our officials are scattered over Russia. It will take at least three days –'

Zalkind smiled in the friendliest way. 'With that, Mr Secretary, I have nothing to do. You must address yourself to our Commissaire for Rumania Affairs. Allow me, Comrade Rakovsky.'

Rakovsky rose from his seat, dignified and suave. He bowed. The Secretary went pale and dropped his gloves.

'I am extremely sorry to be unable to accommodate you, Mr Secretary,' said Rakovsky very politely. 'The last time I was officially in your country I was compelled to leave in two hours and a half. We give the ambassador ten hours, and by that we recognize that he is four times as important as I. Good afternoon.'

The Revolutionary Age, 25 January 1919

NOTE

1. The arrest and then expulsion of Count Diamandi caused a diplomatic uproar in January 1918. Reed's account of the 'Diamandi Affair' oversimplifies the issues and sequence of events: see George F. Kennan, *Soviet-American Relations 1917-1920*, 1: *Russia Leaves the War* (Princeton, NJ, [1956]) pp. 330-42.

31

Prinkipo and After

The invitation of the Peace Conference to 'all the Russian factions' to meet at Prinkipo, filled the ever-hopeful Liberals with rejoicing.¹

We Socialists were not so exhilarated. The Allied Governments, with similar friendly sentiments on their lips, had sent troops, without any declaration of war, to shoot down Russian peasants and workers once before. We watched for the lead pipe in the sock. We knew that the Peace Conference did not mean what it said, and could not carry it out if it did. We hoped that the Russian Soviet Government would not be tricked into putting itself at the mercy of its merciless foes.

It was evidently believed in Paris that the Bolsheviks would refuse the invitation, and thereby give an excuse to declare war against the Soviet Government. At any rate, in order to provide against eventualities, the invitation specified that the Soviet Government should cease all fighting, and withdraw its troops from all fronts. This, of course, was impossible, and the Peace Conference knew it; for the Allied, American, Czechoslovak and renegade Russian troops did not cease fighting, and did not intend to.

The Bolsheviks accepted the invitation to Prinkipo, and the other factions refused it. Finally the other factions also consented, and the Peace Conference thereupon abandoned the whole project – on the ground that the Bolsheviks had not stopped fighting!

At the same time the American and British Governments announced that their troops would be withdrawn from Arkhangelsk 'in the spring' (not a word about withdrawing from Siberia). In order to withdraw, said the statement, the British Government intended *to reinforce the troops at Arkhangelsk by two thousand men*, and the American Government *by several companies of engineers*, who were to build a railway connecting the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk lines. At the time this is published the Soviet Government is meeting these fair words by rushing reinforcements of soldiers to the Northern Front. And American boys, sent to Russia without any reason, against the law of this country, on a shameless

adventure for the benefit of European diplomats and bond holders, are killing and being killed without ceasing.

How has the American Government shown its good faith toward Soviet Russia? It is not necessary to rehearse the whole history. In March, 1918, President Wilson sent official greetings to the Russian people through the Congress of Soviets, and at the same time a proposal from the Soviet Government to fight the Germans with American and Allied aid was ignored. Several months later American consular officers took advantage of their diplomatic privileges, just as German diplomats did in the United States, to plot against the Soviet Government. In September American troops landed in Russia, without the shadow of an excuse, and took part in the forcible overthrow of the governments set up by the Russian people in Arkhangelsk and Vladivostok. In order to stop the flood of criticism at home a branch of the United States Government, Mr Creel's Committee on Public Information, published the infamous Sisson Documents, purporting to show that Lenin and Trotsky were German agents – a mass of forgeries discredited in every European Chancellery.²

The Sisson Documents having met with a cool and skeptical welcome here, another method was tried. The President issued his Appeal against the Red Terror; which document, if sincere, was based on exaggerations and a total lack of understanding of the real situation; and which, moreover, was a palpably class-conscious utterance against the workers of Russia, and called forth the bitterest rebuke from the Soviet Government, which would never have reached the American public if it hadn't been smuggled into the country. Slowly but surely the effect of these two provocative acts of the Government has been dissipated. And at the moment of this writing the third attempt to discredit Soviet Russia in the eyes of the American people is being made – the most brutal and shameless of all. A sub-committee of the Committee on Judiciary of the United States Senate is engaged in 'investigating Bolshevik Propaganda in America'.³

This avowed purpose is, of course, the merest camouflage. The whole course of the hearings showed that 'Bolshevik propaganda in America' had very little to do with the work of the Committee. Its job was evidently to give the sanction of a Senatorial investigation to the cheap vilification of Russia by ignorant and unscrupulous persons. No lie was too shallow to gain credence before the Committee – no pornographic exaggeration was too dis-

credited to receive its solemn attention. All the outworn lies about the nationalization of women, the anarchistic chaos of conditions in Russia, brutal murders of innocent people, Chinese and Lettish mercenaries guarding Lenin, Trotsky's luxurious existence, an American Negro as member of the Council of People's Commissars, New York's East Side being responsible for the Revolution, were rehearsed before a committee composed of some of the most ignorant and reactionary members of the United States Senate. Lies and perversions of fact which had long been too raw for the newspapers to print were joyfully seized upon by the reporters under the august patronage of a Senatorial Investigation, and the press of the country was flooded with outrageous reports about Russia, enlivened by such remarks as Senator Overman's grave statement to the audience, 'Maxim Gorky is one of the most immoral men in the world . . .'

If the Committee had not been forced to hear the other side, it would have confined its investigations to the handful of bank clerks, Y. M. C. A. secretaries, American officials who dared not to go out on the streets of Petrograd, a Methodist Minister who lied on the stand, Madame Breshkovskaya, who is supported by counter-revolutionary money (and who, by the way, was addressed by the reverend Senators as 'Mrs. Skovsky'), a Russian monarchist, and a Chicago professor of dubious reputation.⁴

From these repeated shocks the working-class of the United States is emerging with a clearer and clearer understanding of the truth about Russia, and with a more and more skeptical attitude toward official announcements about the Soviet Government. It sees the Russian Proletarian Republic grow stronger and stronger, mobilize an army of millions; it sees Bolshevism sweep over Europe like a tide, irresistible; it perceives that the capitalist class can disappear, and yet the production and distribution of commodities go on; to its ears come persistent rumors of the wonderful achievements of the new social order unfolding in the most backward of all the great countries of Europe; and more and more certainly it feels that the workers and peasants of Russia are allied to it, by stronger than blood-ties, and that the interests of the world's workers are bound up together.

This is the knowledge that is sweeping the world, and uniting it, while the blundering forces of International Capitalism, divided among themselves in selfish greed, are slowly uniting against the Russian and the German Revolutions. That they no longer dare to

unite openly is evident; the peoples will no longer do their will. But this hostility, although futile in the end, is a source of menace to our new-found freedom. Only ten days ago, when the Peace Conference was still addressing honeyed words to the Soviet Government, the newspapers announced casually the shipment of 60,000 rifles from Bridgeport, Connecticut, to Siberia, 'this making', said the dispatch, '120,000 which have been shipped in the past six weeks'. From all the indications, a great volunteer army of bourgeois is being formed in Europe to attack Soviet Russia – an army of White Guards, secretly organized and supplied by the munitions-works of the Allied Powers and of America.⁵

The abandonment of the Prinkipo Conference is accompanied by the ominous statement that 'other measures will be taken' to 'deal with the Russian question'. This means war – war, perhaps, on a gigantic scale – the Great War, beside which the war just ended is child's-play – war between the possessing classes and the world's disinherited. The capitalist nations, whether they fight or not, cannot exist with a Proletarian Republic in their midst, for in all countries the masses are learning the lesson [of] the Russian Revolution.

Well might the Soviet Government, confronting the allied bourgeoisie of the world, paraphrase that gigantic challenge of Danton's: '*A coalition of kings threatens us; as a gage of battle we hurl at their feet the head of a king!*'⁶

The Liberator, April 1919

NOTES

1. The Prinkipo Islands, in the Sea of Marmara, near Istanbul, were chosen as the site of the proposed peace conference among the warring factions in the Russian Civil War. President Wilson's proposal to invite the participants, including the Bolsheviks, was made 22 January 1919 at the Paris Peace Conference. The Soviet government accepted but President Wilson found the tone of their reply 'studiously insulting'. The White governments of Denikin and Kolchak, who Wilson's advisers believed had been actively encouraged by France, rejected the proposed conference. See John M. Thompson, *Russia, Bolshevism and the Versailles Peace* (Princeton, NJ, 1966).
2. See document 11, note 7.
3. The Overman Committee conducted hearings between 11 February and 10 March 1919. Reed and Louise Bryant appeared before the

committee, as did Albert Rhys Williams, Bessie Beatty, Ambassador Francis and Catherine Breshkovskaya.

4. Breshkovskaya was the titular head of the Committee on Civic Education in Free Russia, a body which was privately funded by William Boyce Thompson of the American Red Cross Mission. She was accused by the Bolsheviks of using this money, which Trotsky claimed to amount to \$2 million, for counter-revolutionary propaganda. Trotsky quoted in Edgar Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days* (New Haven, Conn., 1931) p. 155.

Dr Samuel N. Harper was Professor of Russian Language and Institutions in the University of Chicago. He was on the panel which, with qualifications, authenticated the Sisson Documents for the State Department in November 1918. The genuineness of the documents was, however, repeatedly questioned (by Reed and others): hence his comment on Harper's reputation. See document 11, note 7.

5. Reed was correct to pick up many signs that intervention was actively being encouraged by anti-Bolshevik groups. But the 'volunteer army' he mentions, discussed at Paris, was not enthusiastically received. Both Lloyd George and Wilson were anxious to disengage.
6. Danton (1759-1794), Parisian lawyer and member of the Legislative Assembly, was a prime mover in the overthrow of the French monarchy in 1792.

Bolshevism: What It Is Not

The bright, particular stars who make up the constellation known as the Social Democratic League of America now present an amusing spectacle to Socialist observers.

Professedly they withdrew from the Socialist movement because they wanted to destroy German militarism; in order to do this they adopted the tactics of the capitalist class.

German militarism now being destroyed – a little *too much* destroyed, as a matter of fact – the capitalists turn their attention to destroying the working-class. And our friends Walling, Stokes, Frank Bohn, Charley Russell, Allan Benson, and the plausible John Spargo, turn with them.¹

One people, the Russian people, have seized the capitalist state, destroyed it, erected a proletarian republic, and are at this moment riding the storm of the Social Revolution, fulfilling the prophecies of Karl Marx. From nation to nation leaps the revolutionary lightning, across the face of Europe – liberating and glorious – Hungary, Bavaria, Germany. The technique of these modern revolutionists is what is called 'Bolshevism'.

Among other things Bolshevism teaches that the most implacable and dangerous enemies of the Social Revolution are – not the capitalists, but those 'Socialists' who have mapped and plotted the Social Revolution as it *ought* to be, and are shocked and disappointed that it doesn't act according to specifications. However, the Social Democratic League does not belong even in that category. Its members are forever self-exiled from the world Labor Movement, having taken their stand as 'Socialists' on the editorial pages of the capitalist press, whence they spit their thin venom in the face of the oncoming proletarian revolution.²

Naturally the chief point of their attack is BOLSHEVISM – as it is the chief point of attack of bankrupt capitalism. BOLSHEVISM is the workers' will to revolution; it is unanswerable, invincible. It overthrew the Russian bourgeoisie; it is overthrowing the German bourgeoisie; it will overthrow the bourgeoisie of the rest of the world.

At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, in Petrograd, the bourgeois political parties disappeared. The chief and most desperate opponents of the Soviet Government were the Mensheviks and the Right Wing of the Socialist Revolutionary party – those ‘Socialists’ of whom Bolshevism teaches.

Happening one day to meet the secretary of the Petrograd branch of the Cadet party, I asked him why the bourgeoisie was so quiet.

‘Oh,’ he replied, ‘we can’t do anything now. The Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries are playing our game for us – although they don’t know it. Let them do the dirty work – we’ll pluck the flower . . .’

Mr John Spargo has written a book called *Bolshevism*,* which does the dirty work, and does it quite cleverly. This book will be one day ranked among the minor examples of political Jesuitism. With all Mr Spargo’s undoubted talent for insinuation, with his genius for assembling dubious evidence and passing it off as genuine, with his specious pretense at intellectual honesty and scientific impartiality, this work ranks with the best of the White, Orange and Green Books issued by the various belligerent Governments to explain how they were forced into the war to defend themselves. The preface begins by deprecating the ‘lurid and sensational’ stories about the Bolsheviks published in the capitalistic press.

When the same journals that defended or apologized for the brutal lynchings of I. W. W. agitators and the savage assaults committed upon other peaceful citizens whose only crime was exercising their lawful and moral right to organize and strike for better wages, denounce the Bolsheviks for their ‘brutality’ and their ‘lawlessness’ and cry for vengeance upon them, honest and sincere men become bitter and scornful.

Mr Spargo ignores, he says, ‘the newspaper stories of Bolshevik “crimes” and “outrages”’; he also ignores ‘the remarkable collection of documents edited and annotated by Mr Sisson’. So far, so good. Now for ‘on the other hand’. Bolshevism, according to Mr Spargo, is ‘an inverted form of Tsarism.’

* *Bolshevism*. By John Spargo. Harper & Bros., New York, 1919. \$1.50 net. [Reed’s note.]

'That the Bolsheviks have been guilty of many crimes is certain . . . '

Their worst crimes have been against political and social democracy, which they have shamefully betrayed and opposed with as little scruple, and as much brutal injustice, as was ever manifested by the Romanovs.

He then proceeds to give examples of the very 'crimes' and 'outrages' with which the newspapers have been flooded for the past year – all except the lies about 'socialization of women', which are too patently absurd even for the American public. Most of the evidence for these 'outrages' Mr Spargo takes from official publications of the Soviet Government, *articles in which the Bolshevik leaders themselves protest against abuses*. It is as if a Russian Bolshevik were to republish only accounts of the 'brutal lynchings of I. W. W. agitators' which Mr Spargo refers to, and call it 'Americanism'!

The palpable viciousness of Mr Spargo's method is apparent in the insinuations of treachery, dishonesty and sinister motives on the part of the Bolshevik leaders, and of Lenin in particular, all through the book.

For example, Mr Spargo doesn't actually *say* that the Bolsheviks were paid by Germany.³ In fact, he begins:

In judging the manner in which the Bolsheviks concluded peace with Germany, it is necessary to be on guard against prejudice engendered by the war and its passions.

But after all, says Mr Spargo, 'there were ugly-looking incidents which appeared to indicate a close co-operation with the Germans'. What, in Mr Spargo's opinion, is the chief of these 'ugly incidents'? The 'acknowledged fact', as he puts it, 'that the Bolsheviks . . . immediately entered into negotiations with the notorious "Parvus"'.⁴

'Parvus', as the author hastens to tell us, was 'one of the most sinister figures in the history of the Socialist movement' – suspected spy, war profiteer, and finally, German agent in Scandinavia. He was denounced, not only by Mr Spargo's friends, but also by the Bolshevik leaders, and especially by Lenin, as 'the vilest of bandits and betrayers'.

What is the evidence that 'the Bolsheviks entered into nego-

tiations with the notorious "Parvus"? Mr Spargo merely cites a *dispatch in the German Majority Socialist press, republished in 'Justice', to the effect that 'Parvus' brought to the Bolshevik Committee at Stockholm the congratulations of the German Majority Social Democrats, and these congratulations were transmitted to Petrograd, and further, that Scheide-mann told Haase that the Bolsheviks had invited 'Parvus' to come to Stockholm. And that is all. Mr Spargo admits that Pravda, the official Bolshevik organ, branded the latter statement as a lie.*⁵

'More than once,' he says, 'the charge of being a provocateur was leveled at Lenin and at Trotsky, but without justification, apparently . . .' (Then comes the sly thrust) 'There was, indeed, one incident which placed Lenin in a bad light.'

Then he tells the story of Malinovsky.

All through Russian revolutionary history run the stories of spies and provocateurs who wormed their way into the movement, and took an active part in the revolutionary parties. Malinovsky was a Bolshevik, and was elected to the Fourth Duma by them, being a close friend of Lenin's and greatly admired by him – proposed by Lenin as delegate to the International Socialist Bureau. Later he was discovered to be a police spy . . . And that is all there is to it!⁶

Mr Spargo knows well that hundreds of police spies entered the revolutionary parties – such as Azef – and were trusted implicitly by their comrades.

But the case of Malinovsky is not all. In 1917 Burtsev exposed three provocateurs who were working on the Bolshevik newspaper *Pravda* – and had doubtless been placed there by somebody for a purpose. Mr Spargo then publishes a long telegram from the Jewish Committee in Petrograd (whatever that was), to the effect that the Bolsheviks, in August, 1917, were in 'tacit coalition' with the Black Hundreds. Of course Mr Spargo adds, 'That the leaders of the Bolsheviks, particularly Lenin and Trotsky, ever entered into any "agreement" with the Black Hundreds . . . is highly improbable.'

However, this does not prevent him, in the next paragraph, from asserting that 'they have associated with themselves, too, some of the most corrupt criminals in Russia'.

Mr Spargo gives a list, of which he says in a foot-note: 'Most of the information in this paragraph is based upon an article in the Swiss newspaper *Lausanne Gazette*, by the well-known Russian

journalist, Serge Persky, carefully checked up by Russian Socialist exiles in Paris.'

One of these 'criminals', it appears, is Kamenev, whose 'crime' was that he was arrested by the Government at the beginning of the war, and acted in such a cowardly manner that he was censured by his party!

Another is Bonch-Bruevich, whom Mr. Spargo calls 'Bonno Broueitch', and qualifies as 'Military Councillor to the Bolshevik Government', and 'a well-known anti-Semite'. There are two Bonch-Brueviches – one a General, *commandant of the Northern Front under Kerensky, dismissed by the Bolsheviks when they came into power*; and the other Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich, *a lawyer, not a military man, not an anti-Semite, whose position was First Secretary to the Soviet Government, and who had never been dismissed by the Provisional Government*'.

Another 'criminal' is a certain Gualkine, 'friend of the unspeakable Rasputin', as Mr Spargo puts it. This is a mistake – apparently on the part of the 'Russian journalist' mentioned. The Galkin who was active in Petrograd, and whom I knew, had been for many years an active Socialist, and a Bolshevik, in exile.

And Muraviev, whom Mr Spargo says 'had been chief of the Tsar's police, and was regarded by even the moderate members of the Provisional Government as a dangerous reactionary'. In all this there is not an atom of fact. Muraviev was an army lieutenant who rose to a Captaincy under Kerensky, for whom he organized the shock battalions in the summer of 1917. And Schneour, the provocateur, who was a member of the Bolshevik peace delegation at Brest-Litovsk, was discovered to be a provocateur, and *imprisoned by the Bolsheviks themselves*.

It is perfectly true, as the Commissar of Justice said: '*Our chief enemies are not the Cadets. Our most irreconcilable opponents are the Moderate Socialists.*' The truth of this statement cannot be more clearly shown than by the way Mr Spargo, taking the position of the Moderate 'Socialists', distorts the facts in his attack on Bolshevism.

It all comes down to a question of What is Socialism? Some years ago Mr Spargo wrote a Life of Karl Marx which was received with hilarity by practically all Marxian circles the world over, and especially in Germany. In the present work he still persists in foisting on the world his own discredited caricature of Marx, and

of Socialism, plentifully sprinkled with quotations devoid of their original meaning, and grossly misinterpreted.

I could go on indefinitely quoting and commenting upon this book, had I space and the inclination. It is only fair to say that Mr Spargo in his ignorance often presents Bolshevism in what he thinks is an evil light, but which actually, to workers, will appear very attractive.

But in the last analysis, when the author has ended his veiled hints and thrusts at the Bolsheviki in Russia, his thesis becomes openly an advocacy of bourgeois Liberalism, as opposed to Socialism.

This, for example, is his idea of the way to achieve industrial democracy:

Our American labor-unions are demanding, and steadily gaining, an increasing share in the actual direction of industry. Joint control by boards composed of representatives of employers, employees, and the general public, is, to an ever-increasing extent, determining the conditions of employment, wage-standards, work standards, hours of labor, choice and conduct of foremen, and many other matters of vital importance to the wage-earners.

And here is the path he points to us as the high-road to Social Revolution:

The striving of modern democracy for the peaceful organization of the world, for disarmament, a league of nations, and, in general, the supplanting of force of arms by the force of reason and morality.

The Liberator, May 1919

NOTES

1. Walling, Stokes and the others were leading members of the Socialist Party who broke with the party's leadership over the question of America's entry into the war in Europe in April 1917. Benson, a journalist, was the Socialist candidate for president in 1916 but ran a lacklustre campaign and polled only two-thirds the votes won by Debs in the 1912 election.

2. The Social Democratic League was formed in 1917 by 'war' socialists in America, but it failed to carry with it a significant amount of the party's rank and file support.
3. In September 1918, after the Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer had charged that the brewing and liquor interests had been compromised by German propaganda, a sub-committee of the US Senate Committee on the Judiciary held hearings to investigate Palmer's claim. On 4 February 1919 the committee received Senate authorization to extend its investigations to cover Bolshevik propaganda in the United States. The chairman of the committee was Senator Lee Overman (see Biographical Notes). Reed appeared on 21 February 1919. See Granville Hicks, *John Reed: The Making of a Revolutionary* (New York, 1936) pp. 330–7, for an account of his testimony. Raymond Robins' appearance on 6 March ended the year-long embargo which Secretary of State Lansing placed upon any public discussion of Trotsky's offer in March 1918 to continue the war if aided by the Allies.
4. 'Parvus': Alexander Israel Helphand (1867–1924), a critic of the 'revisionism' of Bernstein in the SPD, his theory of Russia as the 'weakest link' in the chain of capitalism was taken up by Trotsky, with whom he collaborated in the St Petersburg Soviet in 1905. He applied this theory during the World War, acting as an intermediary between the German Foreign Office and the Bolsheviks, funding revolutionary groups and assisting in Lenin's return to Russia. See document 11, note 7 on the 'Sisson Documents'.
5. Philipp Scheidemann (1865–1939), leading German socialist politician, served in 1919 as Chancellor of the Weimar Republic. Hugo Haase (1863–1919), secretary of the SPD and then founder of the USPD, was a central figure in the November 1918 revolution.
6. Roman Malinovsky (1878–1918), a metalworker who joined the Bolsheviks in 1910, and experienced a meteoric rise within the fraction. Despite the suspicions of Bukharin and growing circumstantial evidence that he was an Okhrana informer, he was appointed chief of the Russian Bureau of the Bolshevik Central Committee and publisher of *Pravda* in Petrograd in 1912. Lenin defended Malinovsky against repeated accusations that he was an agent of the Okhrana. Reported dead in 1915, he reappeared in Moscow in November 1918. Lenin was present throughout the secret tribunal which ended with Malinovsky's execution.

33

Notebook Entries on an Interview with Trotsky

15 Dec [1919]

Talk with Trotsky –

The new army

When peace comes army demobilized. Out of 100 divisions (div – 3 brigades – 9 rgts) 10 will be left on most menaced front. Rest of army sent back to work. Of other divisions only cadres remain

Russia to be redistricted. Old Tsarist gubernia & oblast now still remain. New districts according to economic units. An industrial center with the villages around it (for labor, food, exchange. Effort to make peasant workers out of all)[.] Compulsory labor – Compulsory labor training. Compulsory military service – Compulsory military training. These cadres to be *econ* as well as *mil* units. To mobilize pop. for work as well as for training. Permanent divisions constantly renewed. Sent back to their provinces while other fresh take their place. Each a few months, these *cadres* also renewed constantly[;] men called to colors for training two or three months in the year, then sent back to work. Elite of the working class to pass through military – officers schools situated in each district. Probably combined with military, economic & cultural & leadership schools. Candidates will ultimately be elected. Now, in the hurry of necessity, the best and most popular & most influential among workers are *picked*.

Object is to create a situation so that workers can be sent where they are needed. For example, a district in Ural needs 50,000 skilled, 100,000 semi-skilled & 200,000 laborers. Ordered, there – in consultation with the Trade Unions, etc – of course.

‘Will the men go?’

‘We have now in the army 10s of 1000s of disciplined & sincere Communists, who are ready to go where they are required.

[‘]Under capitalism worker must go where job is, whether he likes it or not. Under Soviets, we shall make it especially attractive life for unpleasant jobs & places – low hours, etc. Add to this schools of tech. & other training to make experts, open to everyone, now going on in army to find out what men fitted for, so can be distributed where needed most.[’]

John Reed Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University

NOTE

Trotsky’s interview with Reed coincided with the publication in *Pravda* (17 December 1919) of proposals he had submitted to the Central Committee for directing demobilized soldiers from the Red Army towards essential jobs in the economy. He defended this proposal in *Terrorism and Communism* (1920). Reed included material from this interview in document 35. See Baruch Knei-Paz, *The Social and Political Thought of Leon Trotsky* (Oxford, [1978]) pp. 263–6.

34

The Bolsheviks in 1919: Notebook Entries

Lenin

Genial. Leaned elbow on tribune, crossed legs. Hands in pockets. Chuckled while speaking sometimes. Joked. Gestures – more frequently than ever [*Reed here sketched two hands, palms extended, with the third and fourth fingers curled into palm*] free hand in pocket. One pinched ordinary sack suit[,] collar[,] black four-in-hand [necktie]. Stout, broad, short [word indecipherable].

When you go to see him he hitches up his chair until his knees touch yours and looks *through* you with those terrible eyes[.] Not nervous. Swift but perfect master of self. Gives one impression of being intense[ly] interested.

Trotsky now filled out, surer of self, not impatient any more. Calmer, warmed, more genial also. A *man*. During defense of Petrograd went in front line personally & stopped retreat.

Kamenev also plumper. Looks like cocker spaniel.

Krestinsky – round-cheeked, thick glasses, Finance Commissar high in Party and close to Lenin. Mustache & imperial.

Lunacharsky – thin nervous, delicate

John Reed Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University

35

Soviet Russia Now

I

(Two great stories of Russia in 1920 reached us on the day that John Reed died. The second one will appear in the January Liberator.)

Just now it is a beautiful moment in Soviet Russia. Clear sunny day follows clear sunny day. The fields are gorgeous with hundreds of varieties of wild-flowers. Wherever you go by train every inch of the rich country seems to be planted. From bankrupt, speculator-ridden Estonia, where the fields lie unplowed and the factory chimneys stand smokeless, where the ragged people run beside the train begging, to cross the frontier into Soviet Russia seems like entering a rich, well-ordered land. Everywhere the green crops are growing, occasionally a wood-burning factory sends up smoke; but more significant is the look of the people – none well-dressed, but none in rags, none overfed, but none who look as if they were suffering. And the children! This is a country for children, primarily. In every city, in every village, the children have their own public dining-rooms, where the food is better, and there is more of it, than for the grown-ups. Only the Red Army is fed so well. The children pay nothing for their food; they are clothed free of charge by the cities; for them are the schools, the children's colonies – land-owners' mansions scattered over the face of Russia; for them are the theaters and concerts – the immense, gorgeous State theaters crowded with children from orchestra to gallery. In their honor Tsarkoe Selo – the Tsar's Village, the village of palaces – has been rechristened Detskoe Selo, the Children's Village; a hundred thousand of them spend the summer there, in relays. The streets are full of happy children.

Now the factory workers are taking their two weeks' vacation with full pay. Excursions of workers go from city to city, seeing the country, fraternizing with their comrades. In the office of Melnichansky, secretary of the Moscow Trade Unions, I saw a delegation of Petrograd workers on vacation, coming to make

arrangements to visit the Kremlin. On the islands at the mouth of the Neva, where the millionaires and nobles had their summer villas – a sort of Petrograd Newport – sixteen palatial houses, filled with pictures, tapestries, sculptures, a club-house casino, a theater, a boat-house, have been opened as a vacation-resort for the workers of the city. They dine on white damask on a silver table-service. The gardens are full of flowers.

In Moscow the public gardens are ablaze with flowers. In Petrograd bands play in the afternoon in all the parks. Thousands of people in variegated, but not ragged, summer clothes stroll up and down, or drink glasses of tea and coffee (five roubles a glass, less than a penny with us), and, if they can afford it, buy lumps of sugar from surreptitious speculators at one hundred and fifty roubles a lump. Petrograd is clean; the streets are carefully swept; the Nevsky – that is to say, October 25th Prospekt – is being new-paved, a thing which has not happened since 1915. The militia girls wear flowers in their rifles. You can take a small river-boat at John MacLean Quay – formerly the English Quay – or at Jean Jaurès Quay, which was once called the French Quay – and go up the Neva to Smolny, past the newly-gilded spire over the tombs of the Tsars in Peter-Paul fortress, where now the great red flag floats. In Moscow the last touches are being put to the repairs of the Kremlin walls and towers; the great Tsar eagles surmounting them have had a coat of gold; inside, not a sign remains of the damage caused by the bombardment of revolutionary days. Moscow University, allowed to grow shabby since 1912, has been replastered and is now being painted white. The summer-gardens and the outdoor summer theaters are open and crowded – although most of them, being private enterprises, charge horrible prices for admission. We heard Chaliapin in *Faust* last week at the Hermitage in Moscow.²

The blockade is at last weakening. Long trains full of agricultural implements and machinery parts trickle slowly through from Reval. And every train from every frontier where it is possible to enter Russia brings hosts of foreigners. Labor and Socialist delegations, individual Communists from all Europe, Syndicalists, Anarchists, newspapermen and cranks of every sort; but most interesting of all, the delegates to the Second Congress of the Third International, which meets toward the end of July. In Russia are now gathering the revolutionary leaders of the entire world. Already there are delegates from America, France, Germany, England, Italy,

Switzerland, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Austria, Mexico, Australia, Argentina, Persia, India, Afghanistan, China, Korea, Japan, South Africa, Turkey, Armenia, Holland. The British Labour delegation has gone, the Italian delegation has come. Reviews of the Red Army, parades of the cadets of the officers' schools, in their smart uniforms of blue and red, their khaki caps trimmed with silver – the Petrograd cavalry officers' school all mounted on bay horses, headed by their silver cavalry band. Red carnations are given to the delegates as they leave the trains, to the cheering and singing of immense throngs of people with their tall red banners. The *Internationale*, the hymn of the Russian Soviet Republic, is played incessantly, while everyone rises to his feet and sings and the Red Army soldiers stand at salute. In Moscow and Petrograd special hotels have been opened for foreign guests.

This does not mean that all is well with Soviet Russia, that the people do not hunger, that there is not misery and disease and desperate, endless struggle.

The winter was horrible beyond imagination. No one will ever know what Russia went through. Transport at times almost ceased, and the number of locomotives out of commission more and more exceeded those repaired. There was, and is, grain enough in the provincial storehouses to feed the whole country well for two years, but it cannot be transported. For weeks together Petrograd was without bread. So with fuel – so with raw materials. Denikin's army held the Don coal mines and the oil wells of Grozny and Baku. The Volga was of course frozen, and unusually heavy falls of snow – seven feet of it in one storm – blocked the railroads. The supply of wood – the only available fuel – failed early in the winter; the reasons for this were various, among them the fact that through disorganization or sabotage, the felled logs were not floated down the rivers in the spring, but kept stacked on the banks until the water was too low.

In the great cities like Moscow and Petrograd, the result was appalling. In some houses there was no heat at all the whole winter. People froze to death in their rooms. The electric light was intermittent – for several weeks in Moscow there were no street lights whatever – and the street cars crawled feebly along – in Moscow they stopped running altogether. Chicherin's hands were frost-bitten as he sat in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, and Krasin worked in a room with a broken window, bundled up in a fur coat and hat and gloves.

Ghastly things happened. Trains full of people traveling in remote provinces broke down between stations, and the passengers starved and froze to death. Down on the western front, behind the Red Army retreating before the offensive of the Lettish White troops, I had to change trains at a junction. Of course the train I wanted did not come at all, but after waiting a night and a day I managed to climb into the box car of an empty military train going East, together with two soldiers, a railroad worker going home on a visit with a large broken clock for his only baggage, and an old peasant woman who carried a cage with a dead parrot in it. We built a fire on the floor of the car and, except for the smoke, were quite comfortable until the bottom of the car burnt out.

But in the meanwhile I had to wait at the junction all day and all night. It was nothing but a dilapidated railway station, with a large village – no town – about five miles away. It was frightfully cold – the awful cold driven by a high east wind over the Russian plain – the cold that smashed Napoleon's Grand Army to pieces.

Now, Russians can stand more cold than anyone else in the world. But all through the day came peasants' sleighs driven out of the west, carrying what I first took to be logs of wood, but which turned out to be the stiff bodies of Red soldiers, frozen when they had grown too tired to walk any longer. Three hundred of them, piled like cordwood on the station platform.

The windows in the station waiting-room were broken. The water pipes had burst, and the floor was coated with ice. Upon this, and on tables, benches, everywhere, lay soldiers, uncountable gray heaps of them, tossing and muttering in the delirium of typhus.

The other waiting-room was in the same condition, but in one corner stood a stage brightly decorated with red banners and revolutionary posters, with a dim kerosene lamp burning on a table, before which stood a young fellow in uniform making a speech to the dun mass of soldiers who crowded the place, lifting to him their flat, bearded faces with an expression of strained attention. He was agitating for the Communist Party, pleading with the soldiers to join it, and to contribute to the party press.

'Long must we still suffer,' he said. 'And perhaps even worse things than we suffer now, until our European comrades come to our help. And yet the European revolution itself will mean fresh sacrifices on our part, for we, who have not enough to eat ourselves, must feed our brothers, who will have even less than we.'

But through that darkness we must go, comrades, though all of us die, so that the world of our children shall be a happy, free world.'

And they cheered, those half-frozen skeletons, waving their hats, their sunken eyes shining.

In January I went to Serpukov, the center of a large textile industry – of which I shall speak again. Serpukov is a struggling country town, containing huge textile mills, and shading off into the country through a fringe of villages; all around it are other mills, to a distance of thirty versts.

The situation of the twenty-five or thirty thousand textile workers in and around Serpukov was unbelievable. Typhus was raging; in the Kontchin mill one worker a day was dying. In order to stop speculation by the peasants, and to centralize and equalize the distribution of food, a decree had been issued in the summer forbidding the people of the towns from making independent expeditions into the country after food; the government undertaking to supply a certain ration to the workers. But, except for the children, invalids and Soviet workers, the government had been unable to supply any bread in this region for six months. True, in the fall the local Soviet had authorized each factory to send a delegation to the villages to get food, but this had long been exhausted. Now the only way to get anything to eat was for the workers to go out to the villages by night, and take their chances of smuggling provisions past the soldiers on guard.

The workers would fall down from weakness as they stood at the machines.

As I was the first foreign Communist who had visited Serpukov, the local Party Committee called a meeting of the Factory Shop Committee delegates of all the region and invited me to speak.

The meeting took place in a great white hall, once the Nobles' Club, now the headquarters of the Soviet. One dim kerosene lamp smoked on the speaker's desk, and threw a faint light on the faces and ragged clothing of the assembly. They had come, some of them, from factories twenty versts away in the country on foot through deep snow, with a little bread in their pockets. Their feet were bound with rags. Afterward, when the meeting was over, they would go home as they had come, walking all night through the bitter cold. Very few were members of the Communist Party.

They greeted me by rising and singing the *Internationale*; this song has not become a meaningless ceremony in Russia – they meant every word of it. And when I was done saluting them in the

name of the American revolutionists, a gaunt youth leaped to his feet and cried passionately:

‘From the workers of Serpukov take this word to our brothers in America. For three years the Russian workers have been bleeding and dying for the Revolution, and not our own Revolution, but the World Revolution. Tell our American comrades that we listen day and night for the sound of their footsteps coming to our aid. But tell them, too, that no matter how long it may take them, we shall hold firm. Never shall the Russian workers give up their Revolution. We die for Socialism, which perhaps we shall never see.’

Typhus, intermittent fever, influenza raged among the workers; among the peasants, who could not get salt, pellagra ravaged whole villages. The constitutions of the people, undermined by semi-starvation for more than two years, could not resist. The conscious Allied policy of blockading Russia against medicines killed untold thousands. Nevertheless, the People’s Commissariat of Public Health built a colossal sanitary service, a network of medical sections under control of the local Soviets all over Russia, in places where there had never been doctors – even Zemstvo doctors – before. Every township boasts of at least one new hospital, more often two or three. The doctors were and are mobilized in this service, which is, of course, free. Hundreds of thousands of bright-colored posters were put up everywhere, telling the people by means of pictures how to avoid disease, urging them to clean up their houses, their villages and themselves. A great All-Russian Maternity Exposition was opened at Moscow, to show women how to bear children and how to tend to them afterwards. This exposition was sent traveling all over Russia, among the most remote villages. In every town and city there are free maternity hospitals for working women, where they spend their eight weeks before and after confinement, at full wages, and are taught the care of children. Also in every town, besides the free dispensaries, which are about ten times more numerous than under the Tsar, there are special consultation offices for women with babies at the breast. Everything is done for children here. In half-starved Germany the children are born rickety, and grow up deformed; in half-starved Russia the children are kings.

II

Even greater than the toil of constructing, organizing, drilling, arming, feeding and transporting the Red Army, is the most gigantic task of all, educating it, as no army has ever been educated.

There are the schools for the Red officers, hundreds of schools, where an emergency course of six months for soldiers, and of one year for civilians, turns out several thousand smart young 'commanders' – there is only one officer's rank in the Red Army, that of Commander, whether it be of a company or an army corps. The bulk of these officer cadets is made up of workers elected by their organizations, or young peasants chosen by their villages.

Of course many of the technical instructors in these schools are old Tsar officers, professional militarists. At the graduating exercises of the General Staff Academy – all graduates of officers' schools are members of the General Staff – there occurred an incident which could not happen in any other military school on earth. One of these old professors gave an address on the 'Art of War', in which he glorified militarism after the manner of Treitschke.³

Podvoisky, representative of the Communist Party and of the Commissariat of War, immediately sprang to his feet.

'Comrade students!' he cried, 'I object to the spirit of the last speech. True, it is necessary to learn the art of war, but only in order that war may disappear forever. The Red Army is an army of peace. Our badge, our red star with the plow and hammer, shows what is our purpose – construction, not destruction. We do not make professional soldiers – we do not want them in our Red Army. So soon as we have crushed the counter-revolution – so soon as international revolution has put an end forever to imperialism, then shall we throw away our guns and swords, then shall frontiers be abolished, and we shall forget the art of war.'

By far the most important part of the Red Army is the political-cultural department. This is composed of Communists, and is under the direction of the Communist Party. The Political Commissars all belong to the Polit-Otdel, as it is called. Each unit has its Communist Commissar, who must report daily to the Commissar of the unit above him about the morale of the soldiers, the relations between the army and the civilian population, the Communist propaganda work in the ranks, any discontent among the soldiers, add the reasons for it, etc. In each unit, the Communists form a

separate group within – the company, regiment, or brigade, lead the fighting, strengthen the morale of the soldiers by propaganda and example, and educate the soldiers politically. Besides this work the Polit-Otdel also conducts classes in reading and writing and elementary technical education and vocational training; this is done right up to the front trenches. The actors and actresses of the Great Theater, the Art Theater, are transported to the front to play for the soldiers the masterpieces of Russian drama. The pictures of the great galleries are taken to the front, and art exhibitions and lectures take place in the soldiers' clubs. Vast quantities of literature are furnished the soldiers. They are taught games like Rugby. The soldiers are also creating their own drama, and are building and acting their own plays, chiefly about the Revolution, which in time is bound to become a national epos, a sort of vast eternal pageant spread through all the villages of Russia.

The results are remarkable. The bulk of the army is, of course, made up of more or less ignorant peasants. The peasant usually comes into the army unwillingly – unless he lives in a part of the country once occupied by the Whites, or close enough to the front to hear what they are doing, in which case he volunteers. And so, an unwilling, ignorant lout, unable to read or write, ignorant of what the war is about, he enters the ranks. Six months later he can usually read and write, knows something of Russian drama, literature and art, understands the reasons for the war, and fights like a fury for the defense of the 'Socialist fatherland', enters captured cities under the red banners, singing – in short, has become a class-conscious revolutionist. More than 40 per cent. of the Red Army can read and write and all the Red Navy . . .

Besides the regular military conscription, the Communist Party also conscripts its own members, who by reason of age or other reasons would be exempt under the regular draft. These Communists are concentrated wherever the Polit-Otdel thinks necessary – in units whose fighting morale is weak, where there is a large percentage of illiterates, where there are workers or peasants corrupted by Anarchism or Menshevism. The Trade Unions also mobilize their own members and the Cooperatives.

But why conscription? Russia is not an industrial country; it is a land of peasants. The vast majority of the soldiers therefore, must be peasants. But it is the industrial workers who made, and who now lead and direct the Revolution. The peasant, infinitely backward in comparison with the city worker, followed the latter until

he received the land. The peasant, as a general rule, wants to own his land, to have free markets for his products – this is his petty bourgeois psychology. He usually does not understand Communism, or the ultimate aims of the Revolution. The villages are far removed from the burning life of the great towns, and the peasant, being as a rule unable to read or write, and living far away from the front, usually knows very little of the causes of the war.

If it were not for the incessant attacks on Soviet Russia and the terrible condition of the economic life, necessitating the straining of all resources of the conscious industrial workers, it would be possible to agitate and explain these things to the peasant; as it is, an enormous amount of education is carried on; but not enough. And in the meanwhile the peasant must be made to fight, so that the Revolution, and his own future happiness, may not be lost.

But, on the other hand, the peasant does already understand well enough not to resist mobilization. You can't conscript a thoroughly unwilling people, especially immediately after that same people has overthrown all governmental authority. The draft has proceeded, each time, without a hitch, and the peasant in the Red Army will return to his village a revolutionist and a propagandist.

* * *

The collapse of Denikin, the conclusion of peace with Estonia, seemed to mark the end of the civil war.

It seemed that the breathing space so ardently longed for had come, the opportunity for Soviet Russia to throw all its forces into the work of economic reconstruction.

In January I had a talk with Trotsky, who outlined to me his plans for the future military policy of Russia.

'When peace comes we shall demobilize. Out of one hundred divisions, ten will be left on guard at our most menaced frontier. The rest of the army will be sent into industry. Of the other divisions only the cadres – the frames – will be left.

'Russia is now being redistricted. The new districts shall be ordered according to their economic character, as economic units. Each district will be an industrial center, with the villages and land about it, containing in itself, if possible, labor, food and the machinery of exchange; the effort being to make all the population worker-peasants.

'Each of these districts will be the headquarters of a division cadre, whose task is to mobilize the population not only for the army but for work.

'The army divisions on the frontiers are to be constantly renewed. Each will remain on duty for three or four months, and then sent home to work. In this way the whole male population will be trained to arms, each knowing his place in his regiment, and also his proper work.

'In each district will be an officers' school, through which will pass the elite of the working class. These schools will doubtless become combined military, industrial and cultural schools, fitting workers to be leaders of new life.

'Russia is an industrially undeveloped country; skilled workers are few; and our economic apparatus is ruined by six years of war and revolution. We must be able to concentrate labor upon certain emergency tasks – where it is most necessary. For example, the Ural mining district needs 50,000 skilled workers, 200,000 semi-skilled and 200,000 laborers. We want to be able to send these workers to the place where they are most needed; of course this would be done only after consultation with the Unions, the Shop Committees, etc.'

I asked if the workers would want to go.

'Well, in the first place, we have in the army already tens of thousands of sincere and disciplined Communists – and we are getting more all the time – who are ready to go where the Party sends them. As always, the Communists must lead the working class in this new direction.

'Under capitalism, the worker must go where there is a job, whether he likes it or not; but he works for a capitalist, and not for the working-class, as he does here. We make it especially attractive and pleasant for workers who are ordered to distant places, to distasteful work, etc. – special rations, short hours, their families should be particularly well cared for, like the families of our Red Army soldiers. Add to this unlimited schools for technical and every kind of training, open to all, and you can see the opportunities.

'Registration is now going on in the Army. Every man is carefully examined as to what sort of work he can do, so that at the time of demobilization the men can be sent where they are needed most.'

The desperate situation of the industries upon the close of the war with Denikin, however – and especially the transportation

system – made it necessary to adopt an emergency plan – the creation of the Labor Armies.

Instead of demobilizing, the armies were transformed, all their organization intact, into Labor Armies, and set to work. One Labor Army was set to repair the bridges destroyed by Kolchak, and rebuild the railway lines eastward; another tackled the transportation lines ruined by Yudenich; a third was set cutting and transporting wood in the forests of the North; another turned its attention to the Ural industrial district; still another was sent to help the peasants along the Volga get the ground ready for the spring planting.

This policy was not adopted without some opposition. It was discussed for weeks in the local Soviets everywhere, in the Union branches and Party committees, and in the press. At first there was considerable hostility to the plan. The soldiers were worn out by two years' continual fighting – they wanted to go home; the Unions had remnants of sentiments against compulsory-militarized-labor. It needed Lenin's own clear explanation – that this was not a question of the possible exploitation of the workers by private interests, but simply a plan by which the maximum labor force might be concentrated to save the life of the Russian people, to save the Soviets, the Revolution. And at the same time to keep intact the organizations of the Red Army, in order to guard against a possible treacherous attack – which, in fact, was launched soon afterward by the Poles. So finally the plan was everywhere indorsed, even in the army itself. The Third Army, in the Urals, issued a proclamation to the workers and peasants, declaring that its military task was completed, and that it turned itself toward the 'labor front', and claimed the honor of being called the First Red Labor Army – electing Trotsky as its president. Others followed. The most popular men in Russia were placed at the head of these armies. Every meeting, every paper, was full of the doings of the Labor Armies. The press published daily 'communiqués from the bloodless front', showing the work done.

In a talk I had with Lenin, he admitted that the Labor Armies were an experiment, and that if they proved unpopular they would be abandoned – for it was impossible to make men do efficient work if they didn't want to.

'But where we have the advantage over the rest of the world,' he said, 'is that we can experiment, we can try any schemes we please, and if they don't work, we can change our minds and try

something else. The workers know that at least the Communist Party, which controls the Soviets, is a revolutionary working-class party, that it is fighting capitalist exploitation for their benefit; they trust us.'

The Labor Armies accomplished a colossal amount of work. In six weeks they rebuilt the great steel bridge over the Kam River, blown up by Kolchak, and thus restored the direct route to Siberia – a task which it is calculated would have taken a bourgeois contractor three or four months at least. They worked singing, a great military band playing on the bank, with an indescribable enthusiasm. They restored the railway to Yamburg. They cut millions of feet of firewood for the cities. To the rebuilding of the transportation they brought such energy that the repairing of locomotives, which for more than a year had been steadily more and more falling behind the number damaged, passed the 'dead' point and began to climb.

The cities would have been provisioned and provided with wood for the winter, the transport situation would have been better than ever before, the harvest would have filled the granaries of Russia to bursting – if only the Poles and Wrangel, backed by the Allies, had not suddenly hurled their armies once more against Russia, necessitating the cessation of all rebuilding of economic life, the abandoning of the work on the transport, the leaving of the cities half provisioned, half unprovided with wood, the concentration once again of all the forces of the exhausted country upon the front.

No one can conceive the horrors that will be in Russia this winter, because the nations of the Entente loosed their mercenaries on Russia this summer.

But it will be the last difficult winter; for the Poles are smashed, the Czechoslovaks are almost offensively neutral, the Rumanians are most conciliatory, and the Allies are bankrupt. And in spite of all that has happened, the Revolution lives, burns with a steady flame, licks at the dry, inflammable framework of European capitalist society.

* * *

In the dead of winter, the worst period of the year, the hardest winter Soviet Russia has known, I went out into the country to see the provincial towns and the peasant villages.

There, comparatively far from the metropolis. I found that the Soviet order had bitten deep into the life of the people, that the new society was already an old-established and accustomed thing.

Take, for example, the little town of Klin, capital of Klin *uezd*, or country, seat of the Uezd Soviet. . . .

(This article as we received it stops short at this point.)

The Liberator, December 1920–January 1921
(written July 1920)

NOTES

1. John Maclean (1879–1923), Scottish Marxist and, from January 1918, first Bolshevik Consul in Glasgow; he did not join the Communist Party of Great Britain when it was founded. Jean Jaurès (1859–1914), French socialist, was assassinated by a fanatical patriot on 31 July 1914.
2. Fedor Ivanovich Chaliapin (1873–1938), Russian operatic bass, was performing in Petrograd during the November Revolution. He remained in Russia until 1922 and became artistic director of the Mariinsky Theatre.
3. Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–1896), German historian of extreme nationalistic sentiment.

Biographical Notes

Abramovich, Rafael (1880–1963) Member of the Central Committee of the Bund, which he represented in the St Petersburg Soviet in 1905, and of the Central Committee of the RSDRP. Lived abroad 1911–17. Member of the Petrograd Soviet in 1917. Emigrated in 1920 and with Martov and Dan founded the Menshevik paper *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik* in Berlin.

Adler, Max (1873–1937) Studied jurisprudence at Vienna University. Leading theorist of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party. On the left wing of the party during the First World War and a supporter of the Workers' Council Movement. Member of parliament 1920–3. Professor of Sociology, University of Vienna, 1920–37. Criticized the Bolshevik régime as a dictatorship of the minority.

Aladin, Aleksei Fedorovich (1872–?) Member of the Trudovik faction of the PSR in the First Duma. Resided in England 1905–17 and became London correspondent of the conservative *Novoe Vremya*. In 1917 served as a translator for the British army. After July, representative of the 'Republican Centre', in the entourage of General Kornilov. In exile after the collapse of the White movement.

Andreev, Leonid Nikolaevich (1871–1919) Associated with Gorky and his publishing-house Znanie until 1905, the writer Andreev later gravitated towards the Symbolists and edited the journal *Shipovnik*. He adopted a patriotic stance during the First World War, opposed the Bolshevik Revolution and in 1919 issued from Finland an 'SOS' calling upon the Western world to save Russia from Bolshevik tyranny.

Antonov-Ovseenko, Vladimir Alexandrovich (1884–1939) Son of an army captain, graduate of the Cadet Schools of Voronezh and St Petersburg (1904), and RSDRP activist from 1903. An organizer of the army mutiny in Novo-Alexandria and of the insurrection in Sevastopol in 1905–6, he was sentenced to death (commuted) in

1907. Following his escape he worked as an agitator in the army and navy and in industry. In 1910 became secretary of the Parisian Labour Bureau for Russian trade unionists, and, from September 1914 co-edited with Dmitri Manuilsky the anti-war *Golos*, which had links with the Petrograd Mezhraionka group of the RSDRP. In May 1917 he joined Lenin. In November, as Secretary of the Military Revolutionary Committee, he organized, with Podvoisky and Lashevich, the capture of the Winter Palace and the arrest of the Provisional Government. A member of the first Sovnarkom, he occupied several commands during the Civil War.

Avilov, Boris Vasilievich (1874–1938) A founder member of the Bolshevik fraction in 1904, Avilov was an organizer of the insurrection in Kharkov in 1905. An author of works on the Russian economy, he belonged in 1917 to the United Social-Democratic Internationalists, a group ideologically close to Martov but more hopeful of reaching an accommodation with the Leninists. An assistant editor of the *Izvestiya* of the Petrograd Soviet from September, he was elected to the Central Executive Committee by the Second Congress of Soviets. After abandoning politics in 1918 he worked in the Central Statistical Bureau and in Gosplan.

Avksentiev, Nikolai Dmitrievich (1878–1943) A founder member of the PSR, Avksentiev was a member of the patriotic *Prizyv* group in Paris during the First World War. A Freemason, member of the PSR Central Committee and close associate of Kerensky, he became a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet and Chairman of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasant Deputies. From July to September he served as Interior Minister of the Provisional Government and on the eve of the Bolshevik coup he was Chairman of the Provisional Council of the Republic. President of the Directorate formed in Ufa, he was exiled to China with V. M. Zenzinov when the Directorate was overthrown by Kolchak on 18 November 1918.

Azef, Evno Fischelevich (1869–1918) Leader of the combat organization of the PSR from 1903, and key figure in the assassination of Interior Minister Plehve in 1904 and of Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich in 1905. Azef was exposed in 1908 by the PSR counter-espionage expert, V. L. Burtsev, as having been a police spy since

1893. He took refuge in Germany, where he protested his innocence until his death in 1918.

Bakhmetiev, Boris Alexandrovich (1880–1951) Engineer and member of the War Industry Committee, 1914–15. Assistant Minister of Trade and Industry, March–April 1917. Appointed Ambassador to the United States by the Provisional Government, Bakhmetiev retained this nominal office under the Bolsheviks until 1922 (the United States in this period did not recognize the Soviet régime). He later became Professor of Civil Engineering in Columbia University.

Bleikhman, I. S. (18??–1920) Anarchist–communist member of the Petrograd Federation of Anarchists. Delegate to the Petrograd Soviet. In July he called upon the First Machine-Gun Regiment to overthrow the Provisional Government. Led anarchist expropriations of bourgeois property in Moscow until his arrest by Cheka in April 1918. Died of a lung condition aggravated by imprisonment.

Bonch-Bruevich, General M. D. (1870–1956) Major-General, Chief of Staff of the Northern Front and of the Sixth Army (covering Petrograd). A specialist in counter-espionage, he had played a prominent role in the arrest of Myasodov. The brother of V. D. Bonch-Bruevich, he was one of the first prominent Tsarist officers to go over to the Bolsheviks.

Bonch-Bruevich, Vladimir Dmitrievich (1873–1955) Revolutionary activist in Moscow from the 1890s, founder member of the Bolshevik fraction in 1904, specialist in the editing and production of illegal literature. Member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet Military Revolutionary Committee and Cheka; Executive Secretary of Sovnarkom. Closely connected with the Old Believer community and a Tolstoyan, he devoted himself to farming, publishing and scholarship after 1920, notably as editor of the works of Tolstoy. Played a leading part in promoting the cult of Lenin.

Breshko-Breshkovskaya, Ekaterina Konstantinovna (1844–1934) Involved from an early age in legal, educational and social work on

behalf of the peasantry and a participant in the 'Going to the People' movement on 1874. In 1878 became the first woman to be sentenced to hard labour in Siberia. Founder member of the PSR in 1901. Exiled again to Siberia, 1907–17. Renowned as the 'Grand-mother' of the Revolution, she was a supporter of Kerensky to (whom she appealed to arrest the Bolsheviks) and of close collaboration with the Allies. The American magnate William Boyce Thompson provided her with funds to support patriotic, pro-war propaganda. Emigrated to Czechoslovakia in 1918.

Bryan, William Jennings (1860–1925) Lawyer, politician, editor, Chautauqua speaker, a tireless advocate of reform; Bryan's 'Cross of Gold' speech at the Democratic National Convention in 1896 won him the nomination for the US presidency in that year and again in 1900. Although he was twice defeated by McKinley, and once by Taft in 1908, he remained a powerful figure within the party. On the election of Wilson in 1912, Bryan was appointed Secretary of State. He resigned in June 1915, rather than send the second *Lusitania* note drafted by Wilson, with which he disagreed. He supported religious fundamentalism and in 1925 was the prosecutor in the trial of J. T. Scopes in Tennessee for teaching Darwinian evolution.

Burtsev, Vladimir Lvovich (1862–1942) Independent journalist and historian. After escaping from internal exile in Siberia in 1888, he settled in England after 1890, where he was convicted and served eighteen months in Wormwood Scrubs for soliciting the assassination of Tsar Nicholas II. Returned to Russia in 1905, then went into exile again, finding a new role as self-appointed 'spy-catcher' of the Russian revolutionary movement. He exposed Azef as an Okhrana agent within the Combat Organization of the PSR. Editor of *Svobodnaya Rossiya*, 1899, and *Obshchee Delo*, 1909 and 1917. After the Kornilov affair, called for the suppression of Bolsheviks and denounced Kerensky for cowardice. Member of the anti-Bolshevik National Committee in Paris after 1917.

Chaikovsky, Nikolai Vasilievich (1850–1926) Veteran Populist and organizer of the co-operative movement. In exile 1875–1907. Joined the PSR and then, in 1917, became secretary of the Popular Socialist party. Head of the anti-Bolshevik North Russian government in Arkhangelsk in 1918 and of the cabinet of Denikin in 1919.

Cheremisov, General A. V. (1871–?) Commander of the Northern Front, September–October 1917. Willing to work with the soldiers' committees and with the commissars of the Provisional Government, he had been the Soviets' candidate for the post of Commander-in-Chief before the appointment of Kornilov. Concerned in November that the army should remain politically neutral, he advised Kerensky to form an alternative government at staff headquarters in Mogilev rather than send troops from the Northern Front into Petrograd to reinstate the Provisional Government.

Chernov, Viktor Mikhailovich (1876–1952) Founder member of the PSR in 1901, Chernov was the party's leading theoretician and was responsible for replacing the Populist emphasis upon the peasant commune with an acceptance of capitalism in agriculture. A Zimmerwald Internationalist during the First World War. Member of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. As Agriculture Minister (May–September 1917) he unsuccessfully attempted to persuade his colleagues to endorse peasant land seizures. In January 1918 he was elected Chairman of the Constituent Assembly. Emigrated in 1921.

Chicherin, Georgii Vasilievich (1872–1936) Scion of an ancient but impoverished branch of the Russian aristocracy. Attended gymnasia in Tambov and St Petersburg, and studied history at St Petersburg University. Worked in the records office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1895–1904, before leaving Russia to work in the SPD with Karl Liebknecht, and in the French Socialist Party. Secretary of the Foreign Bureau of the RSDRP, 1907–14, and member of the group *Golos Sotsial-Demokrata*. During the war he organized Russian émigrés in London and worked with the British Left. Detained in Brixton jail in August 1917, he was released in January 1918 in exchange for the British Ambassador, Buchanan. Despite his previous opposition to Lenin, he was appointed Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs. Succeeded Trotsky as Commissar in May 1918 and signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Associated with the Rapallo Treaty, which improved relations with Germany (April 1922). Retired in July 1930 owing to illness.

Chkheidze, Nikolai Semenovich (1864–1926) Georgian Social-Democratic deputy in the Third and Fourth Dumas, Chkheidze adopted a 'defencist' position during the First World War.

Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet from February to September 1917, and chairman of the first Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. A Freemason, he was a member of the Duma committee which presided over the formation of the Provisional Government. During the Civil War he headed the Menshevik government in Georgia before emigrating in 1921.

Chudnovsky, Gregorii Isaakovich (1890–1918) Member of the RSDRP from 1905, of the Mezhraionka group from May 1917, and of the 'Bolshevik Party' from July. Prominent member of the Bolsheviks' Military Organization and the Petrograd Soviet's Military Revolutionary Committee. Participated in the capture of the Winter Palace and arrest of the Provisional Government. Died in the Ukraine during the Civil War.

Creel, George (1876–1953) A crusading journalist in Kansas City, Creel joined the staff of the *Denver Post* in 1909 and when reformers won control of Denver in 1912 became Police Commissioner. Co-author with Judge Ben Lindsey and Edwin Markham of *Children of Bondage* (1914). In the aftermath of the Ludlow massacre in 1914, campaigned with Reed to restore legality to Colorado labour relations. In 1916 wrote a tract for the presidential election, *Wilson and the Issues*, and organized a group of progressive and socialist writers and publicists, including Reed, Lincoln Steffens and Max Eastman, to support Wilson's re-election. After the United States entered the war in April 1917, appointed chairman of the Committee on Public Information, which defended administration policy. A man of liberal sympathies, he discouraged wartime hysteria, and opposed excessive censorship. His *How We Advertised America* (1921) gives an enthusiastic account of his wartime services.

Dan, Fedor Ilich (1871–1947) Member of the Petrograd Union of Struggle for the Emancipation of Labour, 1895; leader of the Berlin *Iskra* group, 1901; founder member of the RSDRP and from 1903 a prominent member of its Menshevik wing. Arrested 1914 and drafted as a military surgeon in Irkutsk, where, with Tsereteli, he formed the 'Siberian Zimmerwaldists', advocating 'revolutionary defencism'. Served on the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet in 1917, and on the Presidium of the first Soviet Executive Committee, for which he edited *Izvestiya*. Under the Bolsheviks he worked for the Commissariat of Health but was arrested in 1921

and exiled in 1922. With Martov and Abramovich in Berlin, he published *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik*.

Denikin, Lieutenant-General Anton Ivanovich (1872–1947) Lieutenant-General from 1916 and Commander of the Western and South-Western Fronts in 1917. Assistant Chief of Staff to the Supreme Commander, March–May 1917. Participated in the abortive military putsch of Kornilov and, after November, in the formation of the Volunteer Army in South Russia, becoming Commander-in-Chief following the deaths of Kornilov in April and of Alekseev in October 1918. From summer to autumn 1919 led the 'Armed Forces of South Russia'. Following the failure of his offensive on Moscow, Denikin evacuated his forces to the Crimea and resigned. He was replaced by Baron P. N. Wrangel.

Deutsch, Lev Grigorievich (1855–1941) A prominent member of the Land and Liberty and Black Repartition populist organizations, Deutsch together with Plekhanov and Zasulich was a founder member in 1883 of Liberation of Labour, one of Russia's first Marxist political groups. A Menshevik after 1903, he remained close to Plekhanov and after February 1917 co-edited the journal *Edinstvo*, in which they advocated the defeat of Germany in the war.

Dybenko, Pavel Efimovich (1889–1938) Seaman with the Baltic Fleet, 1911; member of the RSDRP, 1912; elected Chairman of the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet (Tsentrobalt) in April 1917. From November 1917 to March 1918 served on the Committee for Army and Naval Affairs in Lenin's first Sovnarkom, and until April 1918 as Commissar for the Navy. In May 1918, in breach of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, he initiated an offensive against the Germans. Tried for treason and acquitted. Redeemed his reputation during the Civil War.

Eastman, Max (1883–1969) After graduating from Williams College in 1905 he taught philosophy at Columbia University for four years. Active with his sister Crystal in feminist and suffragette campaigns, he became editor of *The Masses* (1913–17), the most brilliant of all the Greenwich Village little magazines, where he published much of Reed's best journalism. Founder and editor of *The Liberator* (from 1918). Eastman abandoned his early,

idiosyncratic Marxism for an anti-Stalin radicalism. In the end he became a contributor to *Reader's Digest* and a supporter of right-wing Republicans.

Frederichs, Count Vladimir Borisovich (1938–1922) Minister of the Imperial Court (1897–1917). Though of Swedish and not German origin, he was considered by some to be a member of a pro-German party around the Empress Alexandra.

Gajda, Rudolf (1892–1948) Former captain of the Czech Legions in Russia, he resigned to become commander of Kolchak's Northern Army and, by 1919, commander of all Kolchak's forces. Replaced by General Diederichs in June 1919. In November, led an abortive attempt to seize power from General Rozanov in Vladivostok. Allowed to return to Czechoslovakia. After a brief period as Chief of Staff of the Czechoslovak army, dismissed for political intrigue (1926). Founder member of the Czechoslovak Fascist Party, 1927. Elected to the Czechoslovak parliament, 1929. Tried in 1945 for collaboration with the Nazis. Died in prison.

Golytsin, Prince Nikolai Dmitrievich (1850–1925) Last Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Imperial Government, December 1916 to February 1917.

Gompers, Samuel (1850–1925) Born in London of Dutch-Jewish parents, who emigrated to New York in 1863. Followed his father's trade of cigar-making and joined the Cigar Makers' Union in 1864, spending the rest of his life in the union movement in the United States. He reconstructed the Cigar Makers' International Union after a disastrous strike in 1877, and played a central role in the creation of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions in 1881, a body which was reorganized as the American Federation of Labor in 1886. Except for one year (1895), Gompers remained president of the AFL until his death, resolutely opposing attempts to commit the Federation to socialist policies. He was regarded by radicals as their wildest and most determined opponent in the labour movement. President Wilson appointed Gompers to serve on the Council of National Defense, 1917–18. He organized a War Committee on Labor and kept the American union movement strongly behind the war effort.

Goremykin, Ivan Logginovich (1839–1917) Chairman of the Council of Ministers, May–July 1906, January 1914–January 1916.

Gorky, Maxim (1868–1936) A major financial contributor to the revolutionary movement and to the Bolshevik wing of the RSDRP in particular, Gorky, who had been closer to the 'Left Bolsheviks' Bogdanov and Lunacharsky than to the Leninists, became estranged from both groups after 1910. In 1917–18, in his newspaper *Novaya Zhizn*, which served as the platform of the United Social-Democratic Internationalists, he published a column titled 'Untimely Thoughts' which was highly critical of Bolshevik policies. During the civil war he frequently interceded on behalf of the artistic intelligentsia. Living abroad from 1921, he reached an accommodation with the Soviet régime a decade later. Became the leading theorist and exponent of the literary doctrine of 'Socialist Realism'.

Gots, Abram Rafaelovich (1882–1937) A founder member of the PSR, Gots returned from Siberian exile to lead the PSR fractions in the Petrograd Soviet and the first Soviet Central Executive Committee. An active opponent of the Bolsheviks during the Civil War, he was the principal defendant in the trial of PSR members in 1922, following which he was imprisoned.

Guchkov, Alexander Ivanovich (1862–1936) Moscow industrialist, founder member and leader of the Octobrist Party. Deputy in the Third and Fourth Dumas; President of the Third Duma; and member of the Progressive Bloc from 1915. Chairman of the Central War Industries Committee. Minister of War and the Navy in the first cabinet of the Provisional Government, from which he resigned on 15 May 1917.

Gumberg, Alexander (1887–1939) Son of a rabbi from Elizavetgrad, he emigrated to the United States in 1903. A businessman, mainly in the pharmaceutical industry; his only political activity was as business manager of *Novy Mir*, the Russian-language social-democratic paper published in New York. Sent to Russia in June 1917 as representative of a group of American industrial concerns. Became a translator for the Root Mission. His contacts with the senior Bolshevik leadership through his brother Sergei

(party name 'Zorin') made him useful to American officials and journalists. Reed found him cynical, but he remained a friend of Albert Rhys Williams. When Raymond Robins arrived in Russia with the Red Cross Mission, he made extensive use of Gumberg as translator and go-between. For several months in the winter of 1917–18, Gumberg was the sole unofficial contact between the US government and the Bolsheviks. Used by Edgar Sisson to have Reed's appointment as Soviet Consul in New York withdrawn and was never forgiven by Reed for this sabotage. Returned to New York in June 1918. For many years Gumberg worked behind the scenes to improve Soviet–American relations.

Gurko, Vasili Iosifovich (1864–1937) Commander, First Cavalry Division, 1911–12, and of the Sixth Army Corps, 1915–16. Acting Chief of Staff to Commander-in-Chief, October 1916 to February 1917, replacing Alekseev. Commander of the Western Front, March–May 1917, then demoted to Divisional Commander by Kerensky for opposition to democratization of the army. Exiled in September 1917 and died abroad.

Hapgood, Hutchins (1869–1944) The younger brother of Norman Hapgood, leading liberal journalist. The author of 'human document' books such as *The Autobiography of a Thief* (1903). His *The Spirit of the Ghetto* (1902) is a highly praised account of the Yiddish immigrant culture of the lower East Side, New York. A close friend of Reed in the Greenwich Village and Provincetown bohemian world.

Horvath, Dmitri Leonidovich (1858–1937) Landowner, Guards officer, engineer, General Manager of the Chinese Eastern Railway. Resisted Soviet takeover in the railway zone in Manchuria and in Eastern Siberia in co-operation with Kolchak and the Chinese. Proclaimed himself Provisional Ruler in the railway zone (July 1918) pending the reconvening of the Constituent Assembly. Forced by the Chinese to resign (March 1920) and dismissed by them as head of the Chinese Eastern Railway upon establishment of Sino-Soviet relations. Informal leader of Russian émigrés in Peking until his death.

House, Edward (1858–1938) A Texas Democrat and supporter of Woodrow Wilson in the presidential election of 1912, he became

the President's personal emissary and confidant. As a member of the American delegation to the Peace Commission in Paris after the war, he helped draft the Treaty of Versailles. His *Intimate Papers* (4 vols) were published in 1926–8.

Hughes, Charles Evans (1862–1948) New York lawyer and Republican Governor of New York. Appointed to the Supreme Court in 1910. Resigned 1916 to run against Wilson in the presidential election. Secretary of State, 1921–5. Appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1930.

Joffe, Adolf Abramovich (1883–1927) Born into a wealthy merchant family. Studied medicine in Berlin and law in Zürich. Joined the RSDRP in 1902. A close associate of Trotsky in Vienna from 1908, and in 1917 a member of the Mezhraionka group, which merged with the Leninists to form the 'Bolshevik Party' in July. During the Revolution he was a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee. Led the delegation which negotiated the armistice with Germany, but refused to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Served as Ambassador to Germany, April–November 1918. Expelled for conspiracy during the German revolution. He later served as a diplomat in China and Japan, as Rector of the Chinese University, and as a member of Gosplan.

Kaledin, Aleksei Maximovich (1861–1918) Cavalry General, elected Hetman of the Don Cossacks in June 1917. He took part in the abortive putsch of Kornilov in August and led the Cossack élite against the Bolsheviks in Rostov from November 1917. Following the formation of a Military Revolutionary Committee by pro-Bolshevik Cossacks, he committed suicide.

Kalegaev (Kolegaev), Andrei Lukich (1887–1937) Left PSR member and organizer of the peasant movement in Kazan. As Chairman of the Peasants' Soviet of Kazan, he supported land seizures in defiance of the Provisional Government. Appointed Commissar for Agriculture in Lenin's coalition Sovnarkom on 7 December 1917. A critic of Bolshevik policy on peasant smallholdings and on censorship of the press, he resigned from the government after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

Kamenev, Lev Borisovich (1883–1936) Born in Moscow, edu-

cated in Tblisi and at Moscow University. Joined the RSDRP (1901) and the *Iskra* group (1902–3). Co-editor with Lenin of *Proletarii* and *Sotsial-Demokrat*. Arrested in November 1914 together with the Bolshevik Duma deputies and exiled to Siberia. In 1917 he favoured a 'defencist' foreign policy and support for the Provisional Government, considering that the bourgeois democratic revolution had not run its course. Member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet and of the Executive Committee of Soviets. On the eve of the Bolshevik coup he and Zinoviev carried their opposition to Lenin's policy to the point of denouncing it in the social-democratic paper *Novaya Zhizn*. Elected Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Second Congress of Soviets, he resigned over the Bolsheviks' refusal to agree to a socialist coalition. Regained influence as Chairman of the Moscow Soviet, Deputy Chairman of Sovnarkom and as a member of the Politburo (1919–26), in which he formed a 'triumvirate' with Stalin and Zinoviev after Lenin's death.

Kamkov, Boris Davidovich (1885–1938) A leader of the Left PSR, he was expelled from the party following the walk-out of the PSR delegation from the Second Congress of Soviets. A member of the first and second Soviet Central Executive Committees, Kamkov insisted on the withdrawal of the Left PSR from the Sovnarkom in March 1918 in protest against the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. He opposed the Bolsheviks' agrarian policy and was involved in the assassination of the German Ambassador, Mirbach, in July 1918. He was condemned by a revolutionary tribunal, but survived to work in the Soviet statistical administration.

Kautsky, Karl (1854–1938) Graduate of Vienna University. Joined the Austrian Social-Democratic Party in 1875. Worked with Engels in London (1885–90). On his return to Germany after the repeal of anti-socialist laws, he became the leading 'orthodox' theorist of the SPD and of the Socialist International, in opposition to the 'revisionism' of Eduard Bernstein. Editor of *Die Neue Zeit* from 1883. Founder member of the USPD in 1917, returning to the SPD in 1922 when the schism ended. Criticized the Bolshevik regime as 'Thermidorian'.

Kerensky, Alexander Fedorovich (1881–1970) Member of the PSR from 1905, Mason, radical lawyer, Duma deputy and leader of

the Trudovik faction in the Fourth Duma. Member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet in February 1917, but abandoned it to join the Provisional Government as Justice Minister. War Minister in the coalition formed in May; Prime Minister from July; leading proponent of the failed July offensive. Unable to construct a political consensus, he negotiated with General Kornilov over a martial-law régime, then retracted, fearing that Kornilov planned a military dictatorship. Emigrated in May 1918, following the failure of his military counter-offensive against the Bolshevik coup. In his historical writings Kerensky claimed to have been betrayed by both Left and Right.

Kishkin, Nikolai Mikhailovich (1864–1930) Member of the Central Committee of the Cadet Party; Commissar of the Provisional Government in Moscow, March–August 1917; Minister of Welfare, September–October. Appointed Governor General of Petrograd during the last hours of the Provisional Government. After the Civil War he served under the Soviets.

Kolchak, Admiral Alexander Vasilievich (1874–1920) Commander of the Black Sea Fleet, 1916 to June 1917. Resigned his command and was sent on a naval mission to America. Established a military dictatorship in Omsk in November 1918. Defeated by the Bolsheviks in November 1919. Handed over by his Czech allies to the Revolutionary Committee of Irkutsk, by whom he was shot in 1920.

Kollontai, Alexandra Mikhailovna (1872–1952) An independent Marxist, Kollontai was politically active before 1917, especially in Finland. Associating primarily with the Mensheviks until 1915, she then gravitated towards the Leninists, assisting in fund-raising activities in the Scandinavian underground. She made a four-month lecture tour in the United States in 1915, where she encouraged the formation of a Left-Wing movement within the Socialist Party. A member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet in March 1917 and of the Central Committee of the 'Bolshevik Party' from July, she was appointed Commissar for Social Welfare. In 1918 she was a 'Left Communist', and she led the 'Workers' Opposition' with Alexander Shlyapnikov. Best known for her writings on the emancipation of working women, Kollontai also wrote extensively on labour sociology and on socialist ethics.

From 1923 she served as Soviet ambassador in Norway, Mexico and Sweden.

Kornilov, Lieutenant-General Lavr Georgievich (1870–1918) Son of a Cossack father and Buryat mother. Linguist and explorer. In 1917 he was successively Commander of the Petrograd Military District (March–April), and Commander of the Eighth Army, South-Western Front (May–July). He succeeded Brusilov as Commander-in-Chief in July. Encouraged by anti-democratic political, business and military groups, and believing that he had the support of Kerensky, he unsuccessfully attempted in August to replace the Provisional Government by a martial-law régime. Became Commander with General M. C. Alekseev of the Volunteer Army in South Russia. Killed while laying siege to Ekaterinodar.

Krasin, Leonid Borisovich (1870–1926) Graduate of St Petersburg Technical Institute and of Kharkov University, he joined the RSDRP in 1898. Responsible for the construction of electrical power stations in Baku, 1900–4. Organized the underground press and legal and illegal fund-raising ‘expropriations’ for the Bolshevik fraction in particular after 1904. Worked on the electrification of St Petersburg. Arrested for conspiratorial activities in 1908. Chairman of a War Industry Committee and director of a bank and of a munitions factory. Gave his support to the Soviet régime in 1918 and participated in the Brest-Litovsk negotiations. Organized the defence of Petrograd against Yudenich in 1919. Negotiated the Anglo-Soviet Trade Treaty in 1921, and became the first Soviet plenipotentiary in the United Kingdom until 1924, when he was transferred to Paris. Reappointed to London in 1925.

Krasnov, Petr Nikolaevich (1868–1947) Lieutenant-General in 1917. Replaced General Krymov as Commander of the Third Army Corps, August–September 1917. Led Kerensky’s expedition from Gatchina against the Bolsheviks in November. Recognized the authority of Denikin in January 1919. Appointed Hetman of the Don Cossacks, May 1918. Resigned in 1919 following military defeats and a vote of no-confidence by the Don Cossack Krug. Emigrated to Germany.

Krestinsky, Nikolai Nikolaevich (1883–1938) Born in Mogilev of Ukrainian parents. Graduated from the Law Faculty of St Peters-

burg University in 1907 and worked as a barrister. Member of the RSDRP from 1903 and Bolshevik from 1905. In 1917 he was Chairman of the Ekaterinburg and Urals Party Committee, and representative for Perm province in the Constituent Assembly. Deputy Commissar for Finance and Deputy Chairman of the State Bank, 1917–18. People's Commissar for Finance, 1918–21. Member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, 1917–21, and of the Secretariat, 1919–21. From 1921 Soviet plenipotentiary in Germany.

Kropotkin, Prince Peter Alexeevich (1842–1921) Educated in St Petersburg, he established his reputation as a geographer while serving with the army in the Far East. Resigned his commission and became leading Populist and member of the Chaikovsky circle. Arrested in 1874, he escaped two years later and resided abroad for over forty years. Became a leading propagandist of anarchist communism and of 'mutual aid'. A 'defencist' during the war, he returned to Russia in 1917 and supported the Provisional Government. Promoted co-operative and federalist movements and the study of ethics. Unaligned during the Civil War, he nevertheless opposed foreign intervention. His funeral served as the occasion for the last anarchist demonstration in Moscow.

Krylenko, Nikolai Vasilievich (1885–1938) Born near Smolensk, son of a former government official. Student activist (1905–7) in Moscow and St Petersburg. Graduate of St Petersburg University, 1909. Joined the editorial board of *Pravda* in St Petersburg, 1913. Drafted into the army on South-Eastern Front in 1916. After February 1917 rose through the system of soldiers' committees. Member of the Bolshevik Military Organization and of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet. Member of first Sovnarkom and appointed Commander-in-Chief on 22 November 1917. From 1918 he played a leading role in organizing the Soviet legal system. As chairman of the Supreme Tribunal of the Central Executive Committee and as Chief Procurator of the RSFSR (1922–31) he played a leading role in the political trials of 1921–2 and of later years.

Lenin, Vladimir Ilich (Ulyanov) (1870–1924) Born in Simbirsk. Expelled from Kazan University in 1887. Graduated in law from St Petersburg University in 1891. Active in socialist circles, in

particular the St Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class. With Plekhanov, a leading critic of agrarian socialism, as in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (1899). After release from Siberian exile in 1900, co-operated with the Emancipation of Labour group in Munich in the publication of *Iskra*. After the Second Congress of the RSDRP (1903), helped to found the Bolshevik fraction in Geneva (1904). Active mainly as an editor and publicist during the 1905 revolution and until 1917, when he broke with RSDRP policy, adopted the theory of 'permanent revolution', and advocated 'All Power to the Soviets'. In July 1917, at a 'Sixth' Congress of anti-war elements of the RSDRP, the Leninists and the Mezhraionka founded a new Bolshevik Party, which in November 1917 overthrew the Provisional Government and, in January 1918, the Constituent Assembly. From 1917 until the end of his life, as the dominant figure in both party and government, Lenin presided over the transformation of a broadly-based revolution of workers, soldiers and peasants into an authoritarian single-party dictatorship.

Liber, Mark (1880–1937) Born in Vilna, brother of Liber-Gorev and Liber-Akim, who both became prominent Social Democrats. Primarily connected with the Bund, he became its leading spokesman in the RSDRP. Represented the Bund in the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet. Member of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets. Rejected any idea of a Soviet government and after November 1917 opposed negotiations with the Bolsheviks and resigned from the Menshevik Central Committee. Exiled for political activity in 1922.

Liebknecht, Karl (1871–1919) Son of Wilhelm Liebknecht (member of the International Working Men's Association or 'First International'), socialist activist on the left wing of the SPD. In August 1914 voted with the SPD group in the Reichstag to support war credits but in December was the first to reverse his position. Founder member of the anti-war Spartakusbund and, in December 1918, of the KPD. Arrested and imprisoned for anti-war activities in May 1916. Killed, together with Rosa Luxemburg, on 15 January 1919, after the abortive 'Spartacist Rising' in Berlin.

Lunacharsky, Anatoly Vasilievich (1875–1933) Born in Poltava, son of a notary. Studied philosophy in Zürich University. Founder

member of the Bolshevik fraction in 1904, but with Alexander Bogdanov broke with Lenin in 1909 and formed the Vpered group of the RSDRP, which gave priority to extra-parliamentary work. Co-editor of the internationalist *Nashe Slovo* in 1914. In 1917 joined the Mezhraionka and through it, in July, the new 'Communist Party'. Deputy Mayor of Petrograd before the November revolution, he became Commissar for Education in Lenin's government. The author of many works on Marxist ethics and aesthetics, he attempted to apply his communalist ideas in educational (as in the founding of the Proletkult), but during the 1920s he surrendered to the advocates of centralization and party hegemony in all spheres.

Luxemburg, Rosa (1870–1919) One of the founders (in 1893) of the SDKP, which in 1906 affiliated to the RSDRP. An opponent of the 'revisionism' of Bernstein within the SPD, she also broke with the 'centrist' Karl Kautsky in 1910 over his refusal to support her tactic of 'mass strike'. A critic of Lenin's break with the Mensheviks in 1911, she also condemned the Bolsheviks' *coup d'état*. In 1914 she founded the internationalist Spartakusbund with Karl Liebknecht, but both were imprisoned during the war. A founder member of the KPD in December 1918, she was killed during the 'Spartacist Rising' in Berlin in January 1919, an insurrection which she had not approved.

Lvov, Prince Georgii Evgenevich (1861–1925) Member of the First Duma; President of the All-Russian Union of Zemstvos and Towns, 1915–17; Minister-President and Minister of the Interior in the first two cabinets of the Provisional Government, 15 March to 20 July 1917. Emigrated in 1918.

Lyanozov, Stepan Georgievich (1872–1951) Leading oil industrialist. In 1919 he took control of the North-Western Government associated with forces of General Yudenich in Estonia. Lived from 1920 in Paris, where with other Russian industrialists he formed the Commercial Financial and Industrial Committee (Torgprom).

Manuilov, Alexander Apollonovich (1861–1929) Cadet and Rector of Moscow University in 1905, he had been persecuted under the Tsarist regime for his liberal views. Education Minister from March 1917. Resigned together with the other Cadet ministers in July,

when the Cadet Party accused the Provisional Government of prejudging the issue of autonomy for the Ukraine.

Martov, Julius (1873–1923) Co-founder with Lenin of the St Petersburg Union of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class (1895) and of *Iskra* (1900). Broke with Lenin at the Second Congress of the RSDRP (1903), over the issue of a 'broad' or 'professional' party. While abroad between 1905 and 1917, edited *Golos Sotsial-Demokrata* and wrote a history of Russian social democracy. Co-editor of the internationalist *Golos* (later *Nashe Slovo*) from 1914; co-founder of the Zimmerwald movement; opponent of Lenin's idea of an international civil war. Returning to Russia in May 1917 he led the 'Menshevik Internationalists'. After the November revolution he advocated genuine Soviet democracy, while opposing White counter-revolution and Allied intervention. Emigrated in 1920 and co-founded *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik* in Berlin. Co-founder of an International in Vienna intermediary between the Second and the Third. Defined the Bolshevik regime as 'Caesarist' and 'Bonapartist'.

Mehring, Franz (1846–1919) Liberal critic of Bismarck, turned socialist in 1890. As editor of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, supported the left wing of the SPD. Founder member of the Spartakusbund and leading member of the USPD. Historian of German social democracy, biographer of Marx and leading Marxist sociologist of literature.

Melnichansky, Grigorii Natanovich (1886–1937) Member of the RSDRP from 1902. Member of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Moscow Soviet. After the November revolution, chairman of the trade union organization of Moscow Province, and a member of the VTsSPS and of the STO. Reed had met Melnichansky in New Jersey, where he was a union activist. When Reed arrived in Moscow on 17 November, Melnichansky gave him details of the siege of the Kremlin.

Milyukov, Pavel Nikolievich (1859–1943) Graduate of Moscow University and later Professor of History there. Exiled for two years for political radicalism, then spent eight years abroad writing and lecturing, notably at the University of Chicago. Returned to Russia in 1905 and became a leading figure in the Union of Liber-

ation and Chairman of the Union of Unions. Principal leader of the Cadet party, Deputy in the Third and Fourth Dumas. Joined the Progressive Bloc (1915) and in November 1916 made veiled allegations of treason in government and court circles. A constitutional monarchist, he was appointed Foreign Minister in the first Provisional Government but resigned in May, refusing to repudiate Russian imperialist war aims. A supporter of Kornilov in August, he helped form the Volunteer Army after November with General Alekseev. Emigrated to France, where he wrote substantial works on the Russian Revolution.

Mirbach-Harf, Wilhelm Graf von (1871–1918) German Ambassador to Russia from April 1918. Assassinated by Jacob Blumkin and Nikolai Andreev on 6 July 1918 on the instructions of the Left PSR Central Committee, which on 24 June, in opposition to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, had authorized 'terrorist acts against the most prominent representatives of German imperialism'. Responsibility for organizing the assassination was claimed by Maria Spiridonova. This act by the Left PSR was treated by the Bolsheviks as an attempted *coup d'état* and the party was suppressed.

Muraviev, Mikhail Artiemeovich (1880–1918) Lieutenant-Colonel in the Tsarist army. Joined the Left PSR at the time of the Kornilov revolt. Commander of the Petrograd Military District during the Kerensky–Krasnov counter-offensive to the Bolshevik coup. Led Soviet forces against the Ukrainian Central Rada and was then appointed Commander of the Volga Front (1918). In July 1918, following the assassination by the Left PSR of the German Ambassador, Mirbach, he declared war on Germany and moved his troops from Kazan, but was killed during an abortive attempt to capture Simbirsk.

Myasoedov, Colonel S. N. (1867–1915) Gendarme and intelligence officer. Accused in 1912 by the leader of the Octobrist Party, A. I. Guchkov, of having spied for Austria, he fought a duel with the latter. Reinstated by War Minister Sukhomlinov in 1914, but arrested, subjected to an irregular court-martial and executed on 30 March 1915. No evidence of collaboration between Myasoedov and the Austrians and Germans has ever been discovered, and it is now thought that he served as a scapegoat for the reverses of the Russian Tenth Army, to which he had been attached. His case also

fuelled rumours of pro-German influence in the government and led to the dismissal of Sukhomlinov.

Overman, Lee (1854–1930) A North Carolina lawyer and active member of the Democratic Party. Elected to the Senate in 1903. In 1918 Overman was chairman of a sub-committee of the Senate Judiciary Committee which investigated German and Bolshevik propaganda, before which Reed, Bryant, Beatty, Williams and many others testified.

Peters, Yakov Khristoforovich (1886–1938) Latvian social democrat (1904) exiled in London (1909), where he was arrested (1910) in connection with the Houndsditch murders committed by Latvian anarchists. Returned to Russia in spring 1917. He was a friend of journalists, such as Albert Rhys Williams, who were sympathetic to the Bolsheviks, and through Peters Western writers met many of the leading Bolsheviks. Member of the Military Revolutionary Committee during the Bolshevik coup. As Dzerzhinsky's deputy in the Cheka he helped suppress the revolt of the Left PSR in July 1918 and acquired a reputation for ruthlessness. Later served in Tashkent and in the principal institutions of social and political control, as Deputy Chairman of the OGPU (1925–30), the Party Central Control Commission (1923–36) and the Workers' – Peasants' Inspectorate.

Plekhanov, Georgii Valentinovich (1856–1918) The founding by Plekhanov, Paul Axelrod, Vera Zasulich and Lev Deutsch of the Liberation of Labour group (1883) marked the conversion of one wing of the Populist intelligentsia from agrarian socialism to Marxism. A co-founder with Martov of *Iskra* in 1900, he was instrumental in convening the Second Congress of the RSDRP in 1903. Thereafter a leadership struggle between this group and that of Lenin resulted in the Bolshevik – Menshevik split. A leading popularizer of Marxism, Plekhanov considered capitalism and bourgeois democracy to be essential preconditions of socialism in Russia. During the First World War his paper *Edinstvo* called for the military defeat of Germany. In 1917 he worked in the arbitration of labour disputes while denouncing the Leninists as 'latter-day Bakuninists' and the Mensheviks for indecisiveness in their support for the bourgeoisie. Though he considered that the Bolshevik coup 'violated every historical law', he remained unaligned during the Civil War.

Podvoisky, Nikolai Ilich (1880–1948) Member of the RSDRP from 1901. Member of Petersburg Committee of the RSDRP in 1917 and founder member of the Bolshevik Military Organization. Organizer of the Red Guard (Workers' Militia). During November, a leading member of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet and participant in the capture of the Winter Palace. From November 1917 to March 1918, he was War Commissar and Chairman of the Collegium for the Formation of the Red Army. During the Civil War he headed the Supreme Military Inspectorate and served on the Military Revolutionary Council of the Republic.

Potresov, Alexander Nikolaevich (1869–1934) Founder member of the RSDRP and prominent Menshevik publicist. During 1917 associated with Plekhanov's patriotic – defencist *Edinstvo* group and with the independent socialist newspaper *Den*. After November, worked abroad with Kerensky.

Protopopov, Alexander Dmitrievich (1866–1918) Landowner from Simbirsk. Octobrist deputy in the Third and Fourth Dumas. Deputy Chairman of the Fourth Duma. Suspected, following his appointment as Interior Minister in 1916, of belonging to a pro-German faction in the government. Continued the repressive policies of his predecessor. His dementia (possibly due to syphilis) and resulting incompetence contributed to the discredit of the government. Surrendered to Kerensky in March 1917. Shot by the Bolsheviks in September 1918.

Purishkevich, Vladimir Mitrofanovich (1870–1920) Landowner from Bessarabia, Zemstvo activist, official in the Interior Ministry. Member of the monarchistic and anti-Semitic organizations Russian Assembly and the Union of Russian People (1905). Deputy in the Second, Third and Fourth Dumas, becoming leader of the extreme right. Broke with the Union of Russian People in 1907–8 and founded the Union of Archangel Michael. Active supporter of the war effort before and after February 1917. Co-assassin, with Prince Felix Yussupov, of Rasputin. Sentenced for anti-Soviet activities during the Civil War. Died of typhus.

Radek, Karl Bergardovich (1885–1939?) Born of Jewish parents in Lvov, Austrian Galicia. Active in Polish social democracy (1902–8), the German labour movement (1908–13) and the Zimmerwald

movement during the war. Joined Lenin in 1917 and took part in the negotiations of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918). Then joined the Central European Department of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. John Reed clashed with Radek over the trade-union question at the Second Congress of the Comintern (1920) and accompanied him and Zinoviev to the Baku Congress of Peoples of the East in September.

Rakovsky, Christian Georgievich (1873–1941) Born in Bulgaria, the son of a prosperous agriculturalist and merchant; Rumanian by nationality. Studied medicine in Geneva, later qualifying as a doctor. A leading publicist in the Russian, Bulgarian, Rumanian and French labour movements, he helped organize the mutiny aboard the battleship *Potemkin* in 1905. During the First World War he collaborated with Trotsky in the paper *Nashe Slovo*, and as a proponent of Balkan neutrality he played a prominent part in the Zimmerwald movement. As Soviet commissar in South Russia and the Ukraine he attempted to bring about the cession of Bessarabia by Rumania. As head of the Soviet Ukrainian government (1919–23) he advocated confederation in opposition to Stalin's centralizing policy. Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, 1919–25, and of the 'Left Opposition'. Appointed plenipotentiary in Great Britain in 1923, he served as Ambassador in Paris (1925–7) until expelled from the party as a Trotskyist.

Rasputin, Grigorii Efimovich [Novykh] (1872–1916) Son of a Siberian peasant. Adopted the views of the Khlysty sect and, though never a priest or monk, acquired a reputation as a healer and 'man of God'. Became influential in Court circles from 1905, in particular with the Empress. After Nicholas II became Commander-in-Chief (September 1915) and Alexandra began increasingly to interfere with government appointments, Rasputin, suspected of belonging to a pro-German Court Party, was murdered by right-wing patriots (December 1916).

Reinstein, Boris (1866–1947) Russian revolutionary who emigrated to the United States, where he became affiliated to the DeLeonite Socialist Labor Party. On his return to Russia in 1917 he brought DeLeon's writing to the attention of Lenin. He was Reed's closest contact among the Bolsheviks and travelled with him and Albert Rhys Williams to the Estonian front in September 1917.

After the Revolution, Reinstein was head of the Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (where Reed and Williams worked). He wrote an obituary of Reed for the Comintern journal *Die Kommunistische Internationale* in 1921. Later served as an archivist of the Comintern.

Rennenkampf, Pavel Karlovich (1854–1918) Of Baltic German origin, Rennenkampf was Tsarist Commander of the First Army in East Prussia during the First World War. Held responsible for the defeats in East Prussia and compulsorily retired. Executed by the Bolsheviks at Taganrog, March 1918.

Robins, Raymond (1873–1954) Campaigned for Bryan, 1896. Joined the Alaskan gold rush, 1897–1900. On his return to United States, Robins became a settlement house worker in Chicago. Supported Theodore Roosevelt (1908) and chaired the Bull Moose convention (1916) which sought to nominate Roosevelt once again for the presidency. Through Roosevelt's influence Robins was named second-in-command of the Red Cross Mission to Russia in 1917. One of the few American politicians to advocate the abandonment of anti-Bolshevik policies, while in Petrograd he established good relations with Lenin and Trotsky. In March 1918 he was asked by Trotsky whether the Americans would support the Soviet government if it refused to sign the Brest-Litovsk treaty. On his return to the United States he was instructed to say nothing in public about Trotsky's request. Presented a memorandum to Secretary of State Lansing in July 1918 proposing the creation of an economic aid commission for Russia, but the administration now favoured military intervention. Robins was not invited to put his case personally to President Wilson.

Rodzyanko, Mikhail Vladimirovich (1859–1924) Wealthy landowner and leader of the Octobrist Party. Member of the Third and Fourth Dumas and chairman of the Fourth Duma from March 1911. Played an important part in bringing about the abdication of Nicholas II, but thereafter his political importance declined, along with that of the Provisional Committee of the Duma of which he was chairman. After the Bolshevik coup he joined Generals Kornilov and Denikin in South Russia. Emigrated in 1920.

Root, Elihu (1845–1937) Secretary of War under McKinley and

Secretary of State under Roosevelt. Won the Nobel Peace Prize, 1912. Prominent in Republican Party politics. Led the delegation which President Wilson sent to Russia in 1917 to strengthen the war effort of the Provisional Government. The Root Mission returned to the United States without achieving anything. His report to the President emphasized the need to bolster Russian morale by a massive propaganda campaign.

Russell, Charles Edward (1860–1941) A prominent supporter of the Socialist Party in the United States, and a leading journalist and editor. Expelled from the Socialist Party in 1917 over his support for US entry into the war. Named a member of the Root Mission to Russia in May 1917. He alone of the delegates made contact with leading figures in the Soviets.

Ryazanov, David Borisovich (1870–1938) Born in Odessa. Converted from Populism to Marxism in 1889, and in prison or exile 1891 to 1899. Founded the independent journal *Borba* in 1900. After the Revolution of 1905 (during which he was in Odessa), he returned to scholarly work abroad. Affiliated in 1917 to the Mezhraionka group of the RSDRP, and became chairman of the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions. Opposed the November coup, the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Removed from trade-union work in May 1921 for opposition to party policy. Founder member of the Socialist Academy and Marx – Engels Institute. Editor of the works of Marx, Engels and Plekhanov.

Semenov, Grigorii Mikhailovich (1880–1946) A Cossack Hetman from Eastern Siberia, Semenov was ordered by the Provisional Government to form a military unit on the Western Front; instead, he raised a private army and after the November revolution led, with Japanese support, the dominant White force east of Lake Baikal. Fled to China in 1921. Captured by the Bolsheviks in Manchuria in August 1945 and later executed.

Shidlovsky, Sergei Illiodorovich (1861–1922) Landowner. Deputy Chairman of the Third and Fourth Dumas. Leader of the Progressive Bloc in the Duma. Member of the Provisional Committee of the Duma in February 1917. Director of the Main Committee on Land Reform under the Provisional Government.

Member of the Provisional Council of the Republic. Emigrated in 1920.

Shingarev, Andrei Ivanovich (1869–1918) Physician and author of works on the health of the peasantry. Member of the Third and Fourth Dumas. As Cadet Minister of Agriculture in the first Provisional Government he was responsible for the introduction of the grain monopoly. Finance Minister in the second Provisional Government. Killed by soldiers in January 1918 while under Bolshevik arrest.

Sinclair, Upton (1878–1968) After writing several moderately popular novels, Sinclair was converted to socialism and became the most energetic publicist and propagandist in American letters. *The Jungle* (1906), set in 'Packingtown' in Chicago, was his greatest success, and was followed by dozens of other novels, such as *King Coal* (1917), *Oil!* (1927) and *Boston* (1928), which took pressing contemporary concerns and dramatized them with a socialist message. Sinclair broke with the Socialist Party in 1917 over the party's rejection of the war in Europe, and sought in *Upton Sinclair's*, a monthly magazine, to keep open lines of communication between pro- and anti-war socialists.

Sisson, Edgar (1875–1948) Leading journalist in Chicago, 1895–1911. Managing editor of *Collier's Weekly*, 1911–14, and then editor of *Cosmopolitan*, 1914–17. Like Reed, a member of the Dutch Treat Club in New York. Appointed associate chairman of the Committee of Public Information and general director of the foreign section. Sent to Petrograd in 1917. Organized the publication of President Wilson's speeches throughout Russia in the winter of 1917–18. Purchased documents which purported to show that the Bolsheviks were German agents, and his report to the President, *The German-Bolshevik Conspiracy* (September 1918), strongly influenced American opinion. Reed and Sisson had an uneasy relationship in Petrograd, and Sisson took the initiative in January 1918 to have Reed's appointment as Soviet Consul in New York revoked. Reed published a pamphlet in October 1918 arguing that the so-called 'Sisson Documents' were largely forgeries.

Skobelev, Matvei Ivanovich (1885–1938) Freemason and Men-shevik deputy in the Fourth Duma. Deputy Chairman of the

Petrograd Soviet in 1917 and member of the first Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. Minister for Labour, May–September 1917. Under the Bolsheviks he worked in the co-operatives and in the Commissariat of Foreign Trade. Joined the RKP in 1922.

Slutskaya, Vera Klementievna (1874–1917) Member of the RSDRP from 1902. Took part in the Revolution of 1905–7. Worked in the Vasilii Ostrov district in 1917 and was a member of the Bolshevik's Petrograd Committee.

Soskice, David Vladimirovich (1866–1941) Born in Berdichev. Studied law at various Russian universities. Spent at least three years in Russian prisons before fleeing in 1893 to Switzerland, where he made contact with Plekhanov. Settled in England 1898. Joined the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom and edited *Free Russia* from 1904. Married Juliet Hueffer. Soskice returned to Russia in 1905 as a correspondent for *The Tribune*. He was managing editor and a principal financial backer of the *English Review* under the editorship of his brother-in-law, Ford Madox Ford, in 1909. From 27 June to 18 August 1917 he was special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* in Petrograd. A longstanding member of the PSR, he worked closely in Petrograd with the Right PSR, including Savinkov and Breshkovskaya. Served as Alexander Kerensky's private secretary from mid-August. Fled Petrograd soon after the Bolshevik coup, and urged intervention against the Bolsheviks on his return to Britain. His first son, Frank Soskice (Lord Stow Hill), became a prominent Labour politician.

Spargo, John (1876–1966) Cornish miner who emigrated to the United States. Author of *The Bitter Cry of the Children* (1906), a study of child labour. A leading popularizer of gradualist socialist doctrine, his *Karl Marx: His Life and Work* (1910) was the first biography of Marx to appear in English. An influential figure within the Socialist Party, he largely engineered the ballot in 1912 which removed Bill Haywood of the Industrial Workers of the World from the National Executive Committee, and ended the syndicalist influence in the party. He disagreed with the party's hostility to preparedness, and after the United States entered the war Spargo resigned from the Socialist Party to form, with Upton Sinclair and other ex-Socialist Party intellectuals, the Social Democratic League of America. Became a leading defender of President Wilson, and

helped shape administration policies of non-recognition of the Bolsheviks and military intervention. He wrote several anti-Bolshevik and anti-socialist polemics, accusing his former comrades of being dupes and traitors. By the 1920s he had become a conservative Republican.

Spiridonova, Maria Alexandrovna (1884–1941) Imprisoned following her assassination of Chief of Police Luzhenovsky on behalf of the Tambov PSR (January 1906), she was deported to Akatui. Released in March 1917. Served as Mayor of Chita long enough to blow up the local prison. A leader of the Left PSR in 1917, and, after November, a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. In July 1918 she organized the assassination in Moscow of the German Ambassador, Mirbach. Imprisoned and exiled in Central Asia and Siberia. Shot in 1941 to prevent her capture by the Germans.

Stolypin, Peter Arkadievich (1862–1911) Landowner and Governor of Saratov, 1903. In recognition of his success in suppressing disturbances in that province in 1905, Stolypin was appointed Interior Minister and Chairman of the Council of Ministers (1906–11). Dissolved the Second Duma and altered the franchise to produce a more conservative Third Duma. Author of agrarian reform designed to encourage the formation of smallholdings, he also took repressive measures against the labour movement. Assassinated by Okhrana double agent B. D. Bogrov.

Stürmer, Boris Vladimirovich (1848–1917) Graduate of St Petersburg University. Official of the Ministry of Justice. Governor of Nizhni Novgorod and of Yaroslavl. Minister of the Interior, 1902. Member of the State Council, 1904. Cultivated Rasputin and with his assistance became chairman of the Council of Ministers (February–November 1916), Minister of the Interior (March–July 1916) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (July–November 1916). Opposed the alliance with France and England and favoured withdrawal from the World War. Considered in the Duma to belong to the pro-German Court party. Dismissed in response to Duma pressure in November 1916. Died in the Peter and Paul Fortress, where he had been imprisoned by the Provisional Government.

Sukhomlinov, Vladimir Alexandrovich (1848–1926) Governor-

General of Kiev, Volyn and Podolsk, 1905. Cavalry General, 1906. War Minister, 1909–15. Presided over a major reorganization of the army, which in his view prepared Russia for war. Following the execution of Myasoedov, he was dismissed in 1915 and sentenced in 1916 for negligence in his administration of the supply system. Released under house arrest, he was re-arrested, charged with high treason and sentenced to life imprisonment by the Provisional Government. Released by the Bolsheviks in May 1918 on account of his age, he emigrated to Finland and Berlin.

Tereshchenko, Mikhail Ivanovich (1885–1958) Sugar magnate and publisher. Member of the Fourth Duma. Chairman of Kiev War Industries Committee, 1915–17. It is thought that Masonic influences played a part in his appointment to the Provisional Government, within which he, Kerensky and N. V. Nekrasov formed a 'centrist' group between the Cadets and the socialists. Minister of Finance, March–May, and of Foreign Affairs, May–November 1917.

Thompson, William Boyce (1869–1930) American miner, financier and philanthropist. Thompson played a large role in securing funds for Herbert Hoover's relief work in Belgium. In 1917 he underwrote the costs of an American Red Cross mission to Russia, which he accompanied as business manager and then leader. The mission arrived in Petrograd on 7 August 1917, and Thompson was soon flamboyantly buying Russian war bonds and offering to provide American aid for the Provisional Government. To the displeasure of President Wilson, Thompson personally contributed \$1 million to a propaganda campaign led by Breshkovskaya and the PSR, the aim of which was to keep the Russian army actively engaged in the war. After the Bolshevik coup he deftly switched horses and urged recognition of the Soviet government. But he was compromised by his close ties with the PSR, and left Russia in late November 1917.

Trepov, Alexander Fedorovich (1862–1926) Zemstvo activist, 1889–92. Marshal of the Nobility, 1892–5. Senator, 1906. Member of the State Council, 1914. Minister of Transport and Communications, 1915–16. A defender of autocratic government, he condemned the influence of Rasputin and on 19 November 1916 replaced Stürmer as Chairman of the Council of Ministers. Pre-

vented from carrying out a purge of incompetent ministers, and in particular Protopopov, he resigned on 27 December 1916. After the February revolution, he was involved in attempts to free the royal family. Emigrated in July 1918.

Trotsky, Lev Davidovich (Bronstein) (1879–1940) Born the son of a Jewish farmer in Yanovka in the Ukraine. Arrested during his last school year for revolutionary agitation. After two years in prison and two years in Siberian exile (1898–1902) he escaped to Europe. Worked on the editorial board of *Iskra*. Chairman of the St Petersburg Soviet in 1905. Following arrest and escape, he resided mainly in Vienna (1907–14), editing his own paper *Pravda*. During the war Trotsky contributed to *Nashe Slovo* (Paris, 1915) and helped organize the Zimmerwald Conference (1915) of anti-war socialists. In May 1917 he joined the Mezhrainka, which in July merged with the Leninists. From September to November, he was Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet and of its Military Revolutionary Committee. Before 1917 Trotsky, with Alexander Helphand, had formulated the theory of 'combined development' and 'permanent revolution' according to which a backward country such as Russia, in which foreign-led industrialization had retarded the growth of the bourgeoisie, could make a rapid transition to socialism, provided proletarian revolutions occurred elsewhere (in the Russian case, Germany). In 1917 Trotsky took the view that Lenin had adopted his theory. As Commissar for Foreign Affairs he led the Russian delegation at Brest-Litovsk. From 1918 to 1924 he was Commissar for War and the Navy and Chairman of the Supreme War Council.

Tsereteli, Irakli Georgievich (1881–1960) Studied law in Moscow University. Sentenced to exile in Yakutsk in 1902 as a student radical. Joined the RSDRP on his release in 1903. Led the RSDRP group in the Second Duma. Upon its dissolution in June 1907, sentenced to five years' imprisonment. Released in 1913 and exiled in Irkutsk. During the war, with Fedor Dan and V. Voitinsky, formed the 'Siberian Zimmerwaldists', who advocated 'peace without annexations or indemnities'. In the Executives of the Petrograd Soviet and the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets his policy became more 'defencist'. Minister of Posts and Telegraphs (May–July) and Interior Minister (July) 1917. Delegate to the Constituent Assembly. A member of the Georgian parliament from

1919, he represented independent Georgia at the Paris Peace Conference. In emigration from 1921.

Vandervelde, Émile (1866–1938) Leader of the Belgian Labour Party and member of parliament from 1894. Served as Minister of State in the war cabinet in 1914 and represented Belgium in the Peace Conference. He had tried as chairman of the Bureau of the Socialist International to reconcile the rival factions of the RSDRP before 1914. On 11 August 1914 he sent a telegram to the RSDRP in the Fourth Duma urging them to support their government's war effort. However, no faction of the RSDRP endorsed the policy of the Tsarist government.

Venizelos, Eleutherios (1864–1936) Prime Minister of Greece, 1907–15, and strongly sympathetic to the Allies. Overthrown in 1915 but briefly returned to power later that year. On the abdication of the pro-German King Constantine, he returned to power in 1917. Venizelos brought Greece into the war on the side of the Allies.

Voitinsky, Vladimir Savelievich (1885–1960) Member of the RSDRP from 1905, he served as a Bolshevik deputy in the St Petersburg Soviet in that year. After exile in Siberia he emigrated to the United States in 1913. Associated with Dan and Tsereteli and shared their 'defencist' policy on the war in 1917. Member of the Petrograd Soviet and of the Executive Committee formed by the First Congress of Soviets. Political Commissar on the Northern Front from June 1917, he took part in Kerensky's abortive military struggle against the Bolsheviks after November.

Volodarsky, V. (1891–1918) Member of the Bund from 1905. Lived from 1913 to 1917 in the United States, where he worked as a cutter in a Philadelphia garment factory. Joined the Socialist Party and was closely associated with the Bolshevik émigrés who published *Novy Mir*. Returned in 1917 to Petrograd, where he joined the Mezhrainka group of the RSDRP. Member of the Presidium of the Petrograd Soviet and of the Central Executive Committee of the Second Congress of Soviets. Commissar for the Press, Propaganda and Agitation after November. Killed by a member of the PSR on 20 June 1918.

Walling, William English (1877–1936) After graduating from the University of Chicago in 1897, Walling worked for four years at the

University Settlement House in the lower East Side of New York. He published an anti-Tsarist tract, *Russia's Message* (1908), and joined the Socialist Party in 1910. For the next seven years Walling was a leading figure on the left wing of the party; his five books on socialism made him one of the leading socialist intellectuals in the United States. In 1917 he supported President Wilson's decision to declare war, and resigned his membership of the Socialist Party. In the decade after the Bolshevik Revolution, Walling remained anti-socialist and anti-Bolshevik, but sought to keep up relations with labour. He ran unsuccessfully for Congress as a Progressive and Democrat.

Williams, Albert Rhys (1883–1962) Congregational minister, socialist, journalist. Wrote *In the Claws of the German Eagle* (1917) about his experiences as a journalist in wartime Belgium. Went to Petrograd in June 1917 as correspondent for the *New York Evening Tribune*. An enthusiastic supporter of the Bolsheviks, he spoke at the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets. When Reed arrived in September, he and Williams formed a close friendship. After November 1917 they both volunteered to work for the Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda. Williams later offered to form a legion of foreign volunteers to defend the Soviet state. Unlike Reed, he never joined the Communist Party. On returning to the United States, he became a leading supporter of the Soviets. Author of *Lenin: The Man and his Work* (1919) and a memoir, *Through the Russian Revolution* (1921). *Journey into Revolution: Petrograd, 1917–1918*, an important further volume of memoirs with new material on Reed, appeared posthumously in 1969.

Wilson, Woodrow (1856–1924) President of the United States for two terms (1912–16, 1916–20). A liberal reformer in domestic politics, he found it more difficult to reconcile foreign policy with liberal ideals, and engaged in military intervention in Mexico, Nicaragua, Santo Domingo and Haiti. His success in keeping the United States out of the European war assured his re-election against Charles Evans Hughes in 1916. (Reed and Eastman were among the many socialists who supported his re-election.) The German decision to resume unrestricted submarine warfare and a sharp growth in public support for the Allies led Wilson to enter the war on 2 April 1917. His administration led a massive attack against dissenting opinion after the declaration of war. The Department of State and Justice Department maintained systematic

surveillance of Reed.) Even so, through 1918 a significant strand of left-wing opinion continued to regard Wilson as a brake upon the more bellicose impulses of such political opponents as Theodore Roosevelt. All efforts to help the Provisional Government in Russia proved inadequate. His administration's hostility to the Soviets intensified after the Bolsheviks signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. With reluctance Wilson agreed to limited US military intervention in Russia.

Yudenich, Nikolai Nikolaevich (1862–1933) Appointed a general of infantry during the First World War and Commander of the Caucasian Front, 1915–17. After the Bolshevik coup Yudenich formed an army in Estonia and with the assistance of British gunboats launched two attacks on Petrograd, the first in May 1919 and the second in September. He reached the outskirts of Petrograd on 18 October before being repulsed. Following the Treaty of Dorpat of 3 January 1920, by which Soviet Russia recognized Estonia, Yudenich's army was disbanded and he took refuge in the United Kingdom. Later settled in France.

Zalkind, Ivan (1885–1928) A member of the RSDRP from 1905, he took part in the Revolution of 1905–6. Lived abroad 1908–17. From late November 1917 he was Trotsky's deputy in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. Had a reputation in Western circles for violent anti-Western sentiments. In late January 1918 he was sent to Germany, where serious disturbances had broken out, and was with the Soviet Mission in Switzerland, May–November 1918. Replaced as Trotsky's assistant by Chicherin on 29 January 1919. Zalkind was one of Reed's informants among the Bolsheviks in Petrograd.

Zamyatin, Evgenii Ivanovich (1884–1937) Studied and later lectured in naval engineering. Bolshevik, twice arrested and sent into exile. In England from 1916, he wrote satires about the tediousness of English life. After the Bolshevik coup he remained critical of the regime. His dystopian satire *We* (written in 1920) was admired by George Orwell. He was allowed to emigrate by Stalin in the 1930s.

Zenzinov, Vladimir Mikhailovich (1880–1953) Founder member of the PSR. He was twice exiled following the Revolution of 1905. Released from exile on the outbreak of war, he adopted a

defencist policy and became a close friend of Kerensky. A founder member of the Petrograd Soviet, he served on the Executive Committee of Soviets during 1917. Editor of the PSR paper *Delo Naroda*. Left the Second Congress of Soviets in protest at the Bolshevik coup and joined the Committee to Save the Fatherland. After the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, to which he had been elected, he became a member of the 'Committee of the Constituent Assembly' in Samara and of the 'Directorate of Five' formed in Ufa. When the latter was overthrown by Kolchak on 18 November 1918, he and N. D. Avksentiev were exiled to China, whence he fled to Paris.

Zetkin, Klara (1857–1933) Socialist activist in Leipzig from 1878. Lived in Austria and Paris (1878–90) at a time of anti-socialist laws. On her return to Germany joined the left wing of the SPD. Edited socialist women's paper *Die Gleichheit* from 1892; dismissed in 1917 for her anti-war stance. Headed the Women's Secretariat of the Socialist International, and organized the first International Conference of Socialist Women (Stuttgart, 1907). Founder member of the Spartakusbund and of the USPD. Joined the KPD in 1919. Reichstag deputy from 1920 until her death. Member of the Presidium of the Comintern, 1921.

Zinoviev, Grigorii Evseevich (1883–1936) Born in Elizavetgrad, Kherson province. Political activist from the 1890s, and member of the RSDRP from 1901. Bolshevik from 1903. Member of Central Committee of the RSDRP from 1907. Co-author with Lenin of *Socialism and War* (1915). In 1917 became a member of the Petrograd Soviet and of the Executive Committee of the Soviet. Believed that the Provisional Government should transfer power to a socialist coalition and that the Soviets should merge with the Constituent Assembly. With Kamenev, gave advance warning of the Bolsheviks' coup in *Novaya Zhizn*. After November, resigned from the Bolshevik Central Committee over the suppression of press freedom but soon recanted. Full member of the Politburo from March 1919. His prominent role in the Second Congress of the Communist International (July–August 1920) and his chairmanship of the Congress of the Peoples of the East (Baku, September) brought him repeatedly into conflict with John Reed. After Lenin's death, Zinoviev became a member of the 'triumvirate' leadership with Kamenev and Stalin.

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